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THE

ADMINISTRATION OF WARREN HASTINGS,

1772–1785,

REVIEWED AND ILLUSTRATED FROM ORIGINAL DOCUMENTS.

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PREFACE.

THE following pages are a reprint of the introduction prefixed to the three folio volumes of "Letters, Despatches and other State Papers preserved in the Foreign Department of the Government of India, 1772—1785," printed by authority under my editing. The period covers the entire rule of Warren Hastings. It has been suggested and kindly urged, that the introduction which shows the bearing of the new materials on history should be published in a separate volume for those readers who, though they have not the leisure to study official writings, take an interest in the great ruler who, by his genius and courage, raised the Company from being a body of merchants and adventurers into the most powerful State in the politics of India.

Besides using the original records, I have consulted the Reports of the Parliamentary Committees on Indian Affairs published between 1772 and 1785; the History of the Trial of Hastings published by Debrett; the Trial of

Nundcoomar published by sanction of the Supreme Court; Debates of the House of Lords on the events delivered at the Trial of Warren Hastings, printed by Debrett; Impeachment against Warren Hastings by Ralph Broome, Esq.; Memoirs relative to the State of India by Warren Hastings; Scott's Indian Tracts; and many other pamphlets published at the time of the impeachment. I have also referred to a number of old books, such as Hamilton's History of the Rohillas, the life of Hafiz Rahmat Khan, and the Seir Mutakherin, from which I have derived considerable assistance.

This review of the administration of Hastings has no official character or authority.

G. W FORREST.

CALCUTTA,
January 1892.

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THE

ADMINISTRATION OF WARREN HASTINGS.

CHAPTER I.

HIS EARLY CAREER.

IN 1772 Warren Hastings was appointed by the Court of Directors "to preside in their Council at Bengal." Twenty-two years previously he had landed at Calcutta as a writer in the Company's establishment, and had spent the first seven years of his service in performing the duties of a merchant's clerk: appraising silks and muslins, and copying invoices. While he was thus engaged, Surajah-ul-Dowla declared war against the English, and Hastings was taken prisoner at Cossim Bazaar just before the tragedy of the Black Hole took place. After his release, which he owed to the kind offices of the Dutch, he joined the fugitives from Calcutta at Fulta and fought as a volunteer under Clive in the battle of Budge-Budge and the other engagements which led to the recapture of the capital of Bengal. The courage and political ability he dis-

played at that critical time won him the regard of Clive, and gained for him the appointment of Resident at the Court of Meer Jaffir, when that prince was, after the battle of Plassey, proclaimed Nawab of Bengal. Three years after he became Member of Council and strenuously supported the Governor, Mr. Vansittart, against his corrupt Council.

In 1764 Hastings returned to England after fifteen years' service, a comparatively poor man. Macaulay writes—"It is certain that at this time he continued poor; and it is equally certain that by cruelty and dishonesty he might easily have become rich. It is certain that he was never charged with having borne a share in the worst abuses which then prevailed; and it is almost equally certain that, if he had borne a share in these abuses, his able and bitterest enemies who afterwards persecuted him would not have failed to discover and to proclaim his guilt." It was about the time of the return of Hastings to England that the affairs of the East India Company began seriously to attract the attention of Parliament, and in 1766 a Committee was appointed to inquire into the state of the Company's revenue, its relations with Indian princes, and the general administration of its territory. Hastings was summoned to give evidence before the Committee, and the clear and strong view he expressed on the subject won for him both the regard and

gratitude of his old masters. He had spent and lost the scanty fortune which he had brought home and was desirous of returning to India. His application to be restored to the service of the Company was favourably received, and in 1768 the Court of Directors announced to the Madras Government the appointment of Hastings to be second in Council in these handsome terms—"Mr. Warren Hastings, a gentleman who has served us many years upon the Bengal establishment with great ability and unblemished character, offering himself to be employed again in our service, we have, from a consideration of his just merits, and general knowledge of the Company's affairs, been induced to appoint him one of the Members of our Council at your presidency and to station him next below Mr. Du Pré."

At Madras Hastings displayed such zeal and ability that he was selected by the Court of Directors to take charge of the Government of Bengal which at that time was specially in need of a strong man. The double government established by Clive, by which the internal administration of the country had been placed in the hands of natives under the control of a few European supervisors, had proved a failure. The people grew poorer day by day and the native functionaries and zemindars richer. To remedy the evil, the Court of

Directors determined to place the internal administration of Bengal and the collection of the revenue directly under their own European servants. They henceforward determined, to use their own words, "to start forth as Duan." At that time the head of the native administration of Bengal was Mahomed Reza Khan, the Nawab or Deputy Nawab of Bengal, resident at Moorshedabad, and the head of the native administration of Behar was Shitab Roy, the Deputy Nawab of Behar, resident of Patna. The first task imposed upon Warren Hastings when he took his seat as President of the Council on the 28th of April 1772 was to inform the Board that in consequence of orders received from the Secret Committee "he has sent instructions to Mr. Middleton to arrest the persons of Mahomed Reza Khan and Raja Amrit Sing, his Dewan, and to send them under a guard to Calcutta; that he has received advice from Mr. Middleton, that the same has accordingly been put in execution." A discussion then ensued as to the manner in which Reza Khan should be received on his arrival at Calcutta, and it was resolved by the majority of the Board "that one of the Members be sent to intimate to him the cause of his seizure, and to inform His Excellency of the points on which the Honourable Company express their displeasure, and that they look to us to

obtain satisfaction from him for the injuries which they conceive their affairs to have sustained by his mismanagement and corrupt administration."*—Hastings protested against the decision of the majority, on the ground, "that any public show of respect to Mahomed Reza Khan in his present circumstances will be inconsistent with the restraint which has been imposed upon him, and may counteract the end intended by it, in creating an opinion in the minds of the public that his power is but suspended, and thereby discouraging those who may have complaints to prefer against him by the fear of their falling hereafter under the effects of his resentment. He also thinks it very unbecoming the character and dignity of a member of this administration to be employed on a public deputation to a man who stands accused by the Court of Directors themselves of the most criminal conduct".†

A further conflict arose between Hastings and his colleagues as to the arrangements which he proposed should be made consequent on the deposition of Mahomed Reza Khan. Hastings proposed that Munny Begum, the widow of the Nawab Meer Jaffir, whom Clive had placed on the throne of Bengal, should be made superintendent of the Nawab's household and guardian of his person, and that Raja Goordas, the

* Secret Select Committee's Proc. 28th April 1772, Vol. I, page 3.
Ditto ditto ditto page 5.

son of Nundcoomar, should assist her as Dewan. To the latter appointment a majority of the Committee objected on account of the notoriously bad character of the father, but they were not aware of the fact that in making the appointment Hastings was merely giving effect to a suggestion from the Court of Directors themselves that Nundcoomar's services should be acquired and encouraged.* In a letter to the Court, he states—"You directed 'that if the assistance and information of Nundcoomar should be serviceable to me in my investigating the conduct of Mahomed Reza Khan, I should yield him such encouragements and reward as his trouble and the extent of his services may deserve.'* There is no doubt that Nundcoomar is capable of affording me great services by his information and advice; but it is on his abilities, and on the activity of his ambition and hatred to Mahomed Reza Khan that I depend for investigating the conduct of the latter and, by eradicating his influence, for confirming the authority which you have assumed in the administration of the affairs of this country. The reward which has been assigned him will put it fully in his power to answer those expectations, and will be an encouragement to him to exert all his abilities for the accomplishment of them. Had I not been guarded by the caution which you have been pleased to

* Memoirs of Warren Hastings, by Gleig, Volume I, page 250.

enjoin me, yet my own knowledge of the character of Nundcoomar would have restrained me from yielding him any trust or anything which could prove detrimental to the Company's interests."* He further adds—"I hope I shall not appear to assume too much importance in speaking thus much of myself in justification of the motives which led to his recommendation; that I had no connexion with Nundcoomar or his family prior to the receipt of your letter by the *Lapwing;* that on the contrary, from the year 1759 to the time when I left Bengal in 1764, I was engaged in a continued opposition to the interests and designs of that man, because I judged him to be adverse to the welfare of my employers; and in the course of this contention I received sufficient indications of his ill-will to have made me an irreconcilable enemy if I could suffer my passions to supersede the duty which I owe to the Company."† Writing to a friend, Hastings states—"The man never was a favourite of mine, and was engaged in doing me many ill offices for seven years together." But that Hastings could take an impartial view of the conduct of a bitter foe, is apparent from the minute which he wrote regarding Nundcoomar. He tells his colleagues that he "does not take upon himself to vindicate the moral character of

* Memoirs of Warren Hastings, by Gleig, Volume I, page 251.

† Ditto ditto page 262.

Nundcoomar," but "nevertheless he thinks it but justice to make a distinction between the violation of a *trust* and an offence committed against our Government by a man who owed it no allegiance, nor was indebted to it for protection, but on the contrary was the actual servant and minister of a master whose interest naturally suggested that kind of policy which sought by foreign aids and the diminution of the powers of the Company to raise his own consequence and to re-establish his authority." Hastings proceeded to point out that Nundcoomar had never been charged with any instance of infidelity to the Sovereign to whom he owed allegiance, but that the high opinion which the Nawab Meer Jaffir himself entertained of the fidelity of Nundcoomar evidently appeared in the distinguished marks which he continued to show him of his favour and confidence to the latest hour of his life. "His conduct in the succeeding administration appears not only to have been dictated by the same principles, but if we may be allowed to speak favourably of any measures which opposed the view of our Government and aimed at the support of an adverse interest, surely it was not only not culpable but even praiseworthy. He endeavoured (as appears by the extracts before us) to give consequence to his master, and to pave the way to his independence by obtaining a firman from the King for his appointment to the

Subahship, and he opposed the promotion of Mahomed Reza Khan because he looked upon it as a supersession of the rights and authority of the Nawab. He is now an absolute dependant and subject of the Company on whose favour he must rest all his hopes of future advancement."*

The Court of Directors expressed their approval of the course which Hastings adopted in the following terms—"Your choice of the Begum for guardian to the Nawab we entirely approve;† the use you intend making of Nundcoomar is very proper, and it affords us great satisfaction to find that you could at once determine to suppress all personal resentment when the public welfare seemed to clash with your private sentiments relative to Nundcoomar."‡ Mahomed Reza Khan and Raja Shitab Roy were both after a pro-

* Secret Select Committee's Proc. 6th August 1772, Vol. I, pages 23 and 24.

† Burke in one of his speeches describes Munny Begum with characteristic ferocity—"But when I call this woman a dancing girl, I state something lower than Europeans have an idea of respecting that situation. She was born a slave, bred a dancing girl. Her dancing was not any of those noble and majestic movements which make part of the entertainment of the most wise, of the education of the most virtuous, which improve the manners without corrupting the morals of all civilised people, and of which, among uncivilised people, the professors have their due share of admiration; but these dances were not decent to be seen, nor fit to be related. I shall pass them by. Your Lordships are to suppose the lowest degree of infamy and occupation and situation when I tell you that Munny Begum was a slave and dancing girl."—*Burke' Speeches on the Impeachment of Warren Hastings, Volume I page 265.*

‡ Memoirs of Warren Hastings, by Gleig, Volume I, page 257.

tracted trial acquitted of the charges brought against them, but their respective offices were abolished—a step which caused considerable annoyance and disappointment to the ambitious Nundcoomar, who had appeared as Reza Khan's accuser "and displayed both the art and the inveterate rancour which distinguished him." "Nundcoomar," writes Macaulay, "had proposed to destroy the Mussulman administration and to rise on its ruin. Both his malevolence and his cupidity had been disappointed. Hastings had made him a tool, had used him for the purpose of accomplishing the transfer of the government from Moorshedabad to Calcutta, from Native to European hands. The rival, the enemy, so long envied, so implacably persecuted, had been dismissed unhurt. The situation so long and ardently desired had been abolished. It was natural that the Governor should be from that time an object of the most intense hatred to the vindictive Brahmin. As yet, however, it was necessary to suppress such feelings. The time was coming when that long animosity was to end in a desperate and deadly struggle."

Hastings saw that the time had come when the Company must accept the responsibility of the government of the kingdom which Clive had won for them in the groves of Plassey. He wrote to the Directors—"You must establish your own power, or you must

hold it dependent on a superior which I deem to be impossible." The first step which Hastings took towards the establishment of the power of the Company was the removal of the Revenue Office and the Superior Courts of Justice from Moorshedabad to Calcutta. "By these arrangements," he writes, "the whole power and government of the province will centre in Calcutta which may now be considered as the capital of Bengal."* He also looked forward to the time when it should become "the first city in Asia."† Having converted Calcutta into the capital of Bengal, the question which immediately demanded the attention of Hastings was the settlement of the revenue. "It was late in the season; the lands had suffered unheard-of depopulation by the famine and mortality of 1769. The collections violently kept up to their former standard had added to the distress of the country, and threatened a general decay of the revenue unless immediate remedies were applied to prevent it." To remedy the existing state of affairs Hastings appointed a committee of which he was President, and they proceeded on a tour through the province. "On the 3rd June," he writes, "I set out with the committee. We made the first visit to Kissennagur, the capital of Nuddea, and formed

* Memoirs of Warren Hastings, by Gleig, Volume I, page 263.
† Ditto ditto page 285.

the settlement of that district, farming it in divisions for five years. We proceeded next to the city, where we arrived the last of the month. Here a variety of occupations detained me till the 15th of last month —two months and a half. This period was employed in settling the collections and the government of the districts dependent on Moorshedabad, which were large, very numerous, and intricate; in reducing the Nawab's stipend from thirty-two lacs to sixteen, a work which ought to have taken place in January last; in reducing his pension list and other expenses; in forming, recommending, and executing a new arrangement of his household; and in framing a new system for conducting the business of the Dewannee or revenue."*

At the end of June Hastings returned to Calcutta, but the rest of the committee proceeded to visit the other districts. There was much work to be done by him at the capital. It was impossible to place the revenue administration on a sound footing without a thorough reform in the administration of justice, and the first step Hastings took towards accomplishing a reform was the establishment of a Criminal and Civil Court in every district. "The first consisted entirely of Mahomedans, and the latter of the principal officers of the

* Memoirs of Warren Hastings, by Gleig, Volume I, page 260.

revenue, assisted by the Judges of the Criminal Courts, and by the most learned pundits (or professors of Hindu law), in cases which depended on the peculiar usages or institutions of either faith."* These Courts were made dependent on two Supreme Courts which were established in the city of Calcutta, one for ultimate reference in capital cases, the other for appeals. To give the people confidence in the new courts, and to enable the new tribunals to decide with certainty and despatch, Hastings caused a digest of the Hindu law to be prepared by ten of the most learned pundits in the province. He writes to Lord Mansfield: "This code they have written in their own language, the Sanscrit. A translation of it is begun under the inspection of one of their body into the Persian language, and from that into English. The two first chapters I have now the honour to present to Your Lordship with this, as a proof that the inhabitants of this land are not in the savage state in which they have been unfairly represented, and as a specimen of the principles which constitute the rights of property among them."

Hastings recognised the economic principle which Adam Smith put forward a few years later, that the first interest of the Sovereign of a people is that their wealth should increase as much as possible; and he

* Memoirs of Warren Hastings, by Gleig, Volume I, page 401.

was particularly impressed with the necessity for its application to a country like Bengal, where the revenue is chiefly derived from the land rent. When he became Governor, the foreign and domestic trade of the province had almost perished on account of the revival of the old trade abuses which Clive had destroyed. A chief part of the revenues consisted of duties imposed on the transit of goods, but the servants of the Company exempted themselves from paying them. Hastings formed a new plan for collecting the customs. He wrote—"It is simple, calculated for the freedom of trade, and liable to no abuses. All the petty chokeys* of the country are withdrawn, and the distinction of the dustuck,† which (among other objections) pointed out to the rogues in office what boats they were to pass unmolested and what they might plunder with impunity, is abolished. The duty is fixed at $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., the prices of every article fixed and made public; and the duty paid the goods pass unmolested to the extremities of the province."‡ The

*Chauki-Chaukee, corruptly *Chowky-Choky, Chokee, &c.*, the act of watching or guarding property, &c., station of police or of custom, a guard, a watch, or the post where they are placed.—*Wilson's Glossary of Indian Terms.*

†*Dastak, Dustuk* corruptly *Dustuck, &c.*, H. (from P. *dast* the hand, the signature), a pass-port, a permit. In the early days of the British Government, a document authorising the free transit of cert. in goods and their exemption from Custom dues in favour of English traders. In later times it applies more generally to a summons, a writ or warrant; especially to a process served on a revenue defaulter, to compel him to pay any balance that may be due.—*Ibid.*

‡ Memoirs of Warren Hastings, by Gleig, Volume I, page 304.

servants of the Company had monopolized the trade to the ruin of the native traders and thousands of poor weavers.* Hastings determined theretore to establish the system of ready money purchases; and "to declare the weavers free to work for whom they will and to support them in that freedom." He wrote to a friend:—"The Company and their collectors and chiefs of factories are the only merchants of the country; they force advances of money on the weavers, and compel them to give cloths, in return, at an arbitrary valuation, which is often no more than the cost of the materials, so that the poor weaver only lives by running in debt to his employers, and thus becomes their slave

* "A number of these weavers are generally also registered in the books of the Company's gomastahs thus not permitted to work for any others; being transferred from one to another as so many slaves subject to the tyranny and roguery of every succeeding gomastah. The cloth, when made, is collected in a warehouse for the purpose, called a khattah, where it is kept marked with the weaver's name, till it is convenient for the gomastah to hold a khattah, as the term is, for assorting and fixing the price of each piece: on which business is employed an officer called the Company's jachendar or assorter. The roguery practised in this department is beyond imagination, but all terminates in the defrauding of the poor weaver, for the prices which the Company's gomastahs, and, in confederacy with them, the jachendars fix upon the goods, are in all places at least 15 per cent. and in some even 40 per cent. less than the goods so manufactured would sell for in the public bazaar, or market upon a free sale. The weaver, therefore, desirous of obtaining the just price of his labour, frequently attempts to sell his cloth privately to others, particularly to the Dutch and French gomastahs, who are always ready to receive it. This occasions the English Company's gomastah to set his peons over the weaver to watch him, and not unfrequently to cut the piece out of the loom when nearly finished."—*Consideration of Indian Affairs by William Bolts, London, MDCCXXII.*

for life. The collectors trade with the money which they get in the districts, which affects the circulation as well as commerce of the country. By the mode proposed the investment will be dearer, but the trade of the country will be restored, and indeed this country has wonderful resources for it. The remittances of the revenue will flow back in circulation, and in their customs or collections the Company will obtain an ample compensation for the difference which it will make in the price of their cloths. If they do not, they can better afford to pay dear for them than the Dutch or French can."*

To preserve peace, Hastings informed the Court, was one of the great aims of his administration, and like all far-seeing statesmen he realised the fact that an efficient army was the best method of maintaining it. Owing to the weakness which seized the Mogul Empire after the death of Aurungzebe, India had become the prey not only of the Jat and the Mahratta, but of desperate adventurers of every race and sect. Bengal had been repeatedly devastated by bands of fanatics called Senassies.† Hastings acted against them with vigour, and after some hard fighting they were driven across

* Memoirs of Warren Hastings, by Gleig, Volume I, page 305.

† "The history of this people is curious. They inhabit, or rather possess, the country lying south of the hills of Tibbet from Cabul to China. They go mostly naked. They have neither towns, houses, nor families, but rove continually from place to place, recruiting their numbers with the healthies.

the borders. He also determined to relieve the province of Cooch Behar from the grasp of the Bhooteas. The task proved a difficult one. The Bhooteas, strong hardy mountaineers, fought with valour. They made a desperate defence of the fort of Cooch Behar, which Captain Jones stormed and took with the loss of nearly one-fourth of his detachment killed and wounded. He writes—"I have lost good many sepoys and many more wounded. Lieutenant Dickson is wounded in the breast and knees. I have received a ball through my right arm. The sepoys behaved extremely well. I cannot sufficiently praise the bravery and resolution of the officers under my command."* After some further fighting the Bhooteas were expelled and orderly government introduced into the district of Cooch Behar.

After introducing reforms into every branch of the administration and establishing peace and order in the

children they can steal in the countries through which they pass. Thus they are the stoutest and most active men in India. Many are merchants. They are all pilgrims, and held by all castes of Gentoos in great veneration. This infatuation prevents our obtaining any intelligence of their motions, or aid from the country against them, notwithstanding very rigid orders which have been published for these purposes, insomuch that they often appear in the heart of the province as if they dropped from heaven. They are hardy, bold, and enthusiastic to a degree surpassing credit. Such are the Senassies, the gipsies of Hindostan."—(Memoirs of Warren Hastings, by Gleig, Volume I, page 303.)

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 17th February 1773, Vol. I, page 29.

province, Warren Hastings turned his attention to foreign affairs. England was then in a situation, with regard to the Native powers, very different from that which she held at the close of Hastings' splendid administration. Regarded with jealousy and suspicion by all, she was held in respect by none. She had bound herself by treaty to pay tribute to the Great Mogul, and she had made over to him the provinces of Corah and Allahabad in order that he might gather means to support the dignity of a crown whose splendour had once filled with amazement travellers from all quarters of the globe. But the Great Mogul had become only a tool in the hands of the Mahrattas, and to them he was compelled to transfer the provinces given to him by the English. Hastings saw that the presence of these marauders at our gate was a grave and menacing danger. Peace and prosperity in our own territory were an impossibility. He acted with his usual promptness and courage. He determined to pay no more tribute to a sovereign who was incapable of affording the English frontier protection. He also determined to restore the provinces of Corah and Allahabad to the Vizier of Oude from whom they had been taken by Clive. James Mill in his History of India writes—"The choice lay between preserving them for the Emperor and making them over to the Vizier. Generosity, had it any place in such arrangements, pleaded

with almost unexampled strength in behalf of the forlorn Emperor, the nominal sovereign of so vast an Empire, the representative of so illustrious a race, who now possessed hardly a roof to protect him. Justice too, or something not easily distinguished from justice, spoke on the same side: considering that, in the first place, the Emperor had a right to the provinces, both by his quality of sovereign of India, and also by the peculiar concession and grant of the English Company, if not in express terms for, most certainly in consideration of, his not absolutely necessary but highly useful grant of the Dewanee of the three great and opulent provinces of Bengal, Behar and Orissa; and that, in the second place, he could not, by any fair construction, be deemed to have forfeited any right by the surrender of the provinces, an act which was in the highest degree involuntary and therefore not his own."* The choice lay not between preserving them for the Emperor and making them over to the Vizier, but between allowing them to remain in the hands of the Mahrattas or restoring them to the Vizier to whom they once belonged. The Emperor's right to them was purely titular, the same right which he possessed over the whole kingdom of Oude, and this titular right he owed to the English. In the report which he laid before the Board regarding his negotiations with the

* Mill's History of India, Volume III, page 395.

Nawab Sujah-ul-Dowla at Benares, whither he had gone in June 1773, Hastings writes as follows :. "Had we restored these districts to the King, who so lately abandoned them, and who is confessedly unable by his own strength to maintain them, we should still have been burthened with the care of their defence, or we should have given them only nominally to the King, but in reality to the Mahrattas, the evil consequences of which it is needless to enumerate."* Mill is not quite accurate when he states that the surrender of the provinces to the Mahrattas was "an act which was in the highest degree involuntary and therefore not his own." In spite of the advice of the Council in Calcutta, who warned him of the danger of such a movement, the Emperor threw himself into the arms of the Mahrattas and was by them installed on the throne of Delhi. But, whether the act was voluntary or involuntary, the possession of the provinces by the Mahrattas was incompatible with the safety of our dominion. Regarding the allegation that the Emperor was unable to protect them, Mill writes—"But it is certainly true that the Emperor was not less able at that time than he was at the time when they were first bestowed upon him; or than he was at any point of the time during which they had been left at his hands."† When they

* Secret Select Committee's Proc. 4th October 1773, Vol. I, page 50. Marshman's History of India, page 172.

† Mill's History of India, Volume III, page 398.

were bestowed upon him the Mahrattas had not recovered from their crushing defeat at Paniput, and had not equipped an army of fifty thousand horse and a large body of infantry, with a numerous artillery to regain their footing and renew their spoliations. The Emperor was not at that time, to use the words of Mill himself, "no better than an instrument in the hands of the Mahrattas." Mill says: "that the English strengthened their barrier by giving to a crude native Government a vast frontier to defend, instead of combining against the Mahrattas the forces of the Rohillas, the Emperor and the Vizier, will hardly be affirmed by those who reflect how easily the balance among those persons might have been trimmed, or who know the consequence of the arrangement that was formed. For a sum of money Corah and Allahabad were tendered to the Vizier."* To combine the forces of the Rohillas, the Emperor, and the Vizier against the Mahrattas was an impossibility. All were jealous of the growing power of the English. The Emperor was now an instrument in the hands of the Mahrattas. An alliance between them and the Rohillas had already once been concluded, and negotiations were on foot for an alliance between them and the Vizier. All that Hastings could do was to make the alliance between the Vizier and the English as stable as possible, and it

* Mill's History of India, Volume III, page 398.

could only be made stable by making the power of the Vizier entirely dependent on English bayonets. As Hastings wrote to the Board—"By ceding them to the Vizier we strengthen our alliance with him, we make him more dependent upon us as he is more exposed to the hostilities of the Mahrattas; we render a junction between him and them, which has been sometimes apprehended, morally impossible, since their pretentions to Corah will be a constant source of animosity between them; we free ourselves from the expense and all the dangers attending either a remote property or a remote connection; we adhere literally to the limited system laid down by the Hon'ble Court of Directors; we are no longer under the necessity of exhausting the wealth of our own provinces in the pay and disbursements of our brigades employed at a distance beyond them; but by fixing the sum to be paid by the Vizier for their services at their whole expense, and by removing every possible cause for their passing our own borders, but at his requisition and for his defence, we provide effectually for the protection of our frontier, and reduce the expenses of our army even in employing it; and, lastly, we acquire a net sum of 50 lakhs of rupees most seasonably obtained for the relief of the Company's necessities, and the deficient circulation of the currency of the provinces." The plea put forward by Mill that the Emperor deserved

more generous treatment on account of his having bestowed on the English the Dewannee of Bengal, Behar and Orissa, is met by the following remarks of Hastings—"Whatever policy suggested the first idea of the tribute, and whatever title he may be conceived to have had to the payment of it while he remained under our protection and united his fortune with ours, his late conduct has forfeited every claim to it, and made it even dangerous to allow it, even if the resources of Bengal and the exigencies of the Company could any longer admit of it. Our conduct towards him has certainly afforded matter of admiration to the whole people of Hindoostan, whether they construe it as the effect of a mistaken principle of duty, the just return of benefits received, or attribute it to some hidden cause. We have persevered with a fidelity unknown to them in an unshaken alliance to a pageant of our own creation, and lavished on him the wealth of this country, which is its blood, although not one of his own natural subjects has ever afforded him the least pledge of voluntary obedience, although our constituents have been compelled to withhold the legal claims of our own sovereign, although we have loaded them with an accumulated debt of a crore and a half of rupees, almost the exact amount of the sums remitted for the use of a man who in return has ungratefully deserted and since headed armies against us. It is

unjust to argue, in support of his pretensions on the Company, that the tribute is no more than a reasonable acknowledgment for the favour which they received from him in the grant of the Dewannee. They gave him all. They received nothing from him, but a presumptuous gift of what was not his to give, but what they had already acquired by their own power, the same power to which he was indebted for his crown, and even for his existence."*

On the 24th June 1773 Hastings left Calcutta for Benares, where it was arranged he should have an interview with the Vizier of Oude. Before his departure he had received letters from him complaining of the treachery and breach of faith of the Rohilla chiefs, and expressing a desire to invade and conquer their country. The situation of the Rohilla country which the Vizier proposed to conquer is described by Hastings as follows: "It lies open to the south. It is bounded on the west by the Ganges, and on the north and east by the mountains of Tartary. It is to the province of Oude, in respect both to its geographical and political relation, exactly what Scotland was to England before the reign of Queen Elizabeth."† In the earliest times the country

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 4th October 1773, Vol. I page 51.

† Memoirs of Warren Hastings, by Gleig, Volume I, page 358.

bore the name of Kather, and was peopled by a highly civilized Aryan race. In 1290 it was brought into subjection to the Mussulman rule, and in the days of the Great Moghul emperors it was ruled by a succession of Moghul governors appointed from Delhi. About 1673 two brothers, named Shah Alum and Hussein Khan, adventurers from Afghanistan, settled in Kather * and obtained some small employments under the officers of the Moghul Government, but neither of them adopted the country as a permanent residence. Hussein Khan had a slave, Daud Khan, who, when his master returned to Afghanistan, was permitted to proceed to India to seek his fortune. Daud Khan was a man endowed with considerable military skill and bravery, and he quickly got around him a numerous band of Afghan followers. For the good service he rendered the Emperor in defeating a body of Mahrattas he was granted a small district. The adventurer rewarded the Emperor's generosity by taking service with the Raja of Kumaon, who was at war with the empire. The Raja, however, having grown suspicious of the fidelity of Daud, invited him to a friendly meeting, made him a prisoner, and killed him by cutting off his feet and extracting the sinews from the stumps. Daud's adopted son at once took posses-

* Kather, shortly speaking, is the name of the north-eastern portion of the modern Rohilcund lying beyond the Ramganga.

sion of his estates and placed himself at the head of his forces. He was at the time only a lad of fourteen years, but strength of character and ability compensated for lack of years. By birth he belonged to the Jat caste, but the Afghan adventurer during one of his campaigns finding him amongst some of his prisoners took a fancy to him, adopted him, made him a Mussulman and named him Ali Muhammad.* Ali Muhammad on his accession turned his attention to the extension of his dominion, and by his skill and courage soon made himself supreme throughout the Kather region, which henceforward was known by the name of Rohilcund, on account of the Afghans who followed the

* This account of Ali's origin is, no doubt, extremely distasteful to the Pathans themselves. That their hero should have been born of a by no means exalted Hindu caste, that he should have been a captive taken in petty war, and adopted son of a slave, grates on their feelings. They prefer to consider him the son of Shah Alam. But that he was what we have here described him is shown by the best contemporary authority as well as by a common saying of the Hindus themselves:—

"Aise se aise dekho Parbhu ke thát,
Aonla ká rája bhayo Bakauli ka Jat."
"See from God's will what mighty changes spring,
Bakauli's Jat became great Aonla's King."

—*Gazetteer, N.-W. P., Vol. V, Rohilcund.*

Hamilton in his History of the Rohilla Afghans, published in 1788, writes: "Some accounts have said that Ali Muhammad was not the son of Daud, but by birth a Hindu, and adopted by him. This, however, is not only an incongruity (as a Hindu is seldom or never known to be adopted by a Mussulman), but is moreover altogether unsupported in the original Persian manuscript, where he is positively mentioned as Daud's second son."

standard of Ali.* After enjoying for five years the almost undisputed sovereignty of Rohilcund, Ali Muhammad was besieged in the fortress of Bangarh, forced to surrender, and carried a prisoner to Delhi. He had only been six months a prisoner when some five or six thousand Pathans appeared before the palace at Delhi and demanded his surrender. The capital being bare

* "The Rohillas or Ruhilas were Pathans, that is to say, men of Afghan or Baluchi extraction. Their name is said to mean, in some transmontane language, *hillmen*. Why it should have been applied to the Pathans of what is now called Rohilcund, rather than to other adventurers of similar origin, it is difficult to say."—*Gazetteer, N.-W. P., Vol. V, Rohilcund.*

Mill in Volume II, page 326, in a note, writes as follows: "This district, which gave its name to the Rohillas, a people considerable in the History of British India, is said by Major Stewart, on his Persian authorities, to have been the original seat of the Afghans, whose mountainous country (Roh signifies a mountainous country; and Rohillas, mountaineers or highlanders) extended, according to the same authority, in length from Sewad and Bijore to the town of Sui, in Bukharest, and in breadth, from Hussin to Rabul."—*Stewart's Bengal, page* 127.

Mr. Horace Hayman Wilson, in commenting on this passage, writes.—"There is some curious blundering either by Stewart or the authorities he has followed in these statements; and if the latter, it is extraordinary that he should have cited them without correction. What contiguity could Bukharest possibly have to any part of the Afghan country, and where are Hussin and Rabul? Ferishta furnishes a more accurate version. Roh extends in length, he says, from Sewad and Bijore, to Sui, in the district of Bhukkur, and in breadth from Husun Abdal to Kabul. According to him Roh means mountain in the Afghan language, but no such term occurs in the list of Pushtu words collected by Mr. Elphinstone, nor in a Pushtu vocabulary, compiled by Mohabbet Khan, of which a manuscript is in the library of the East India Company; Roh is there explained to be the name of an extensive country, intermediate between Iran and Turan, bounded on the north by Kashkur, on the south by Baluchistan, on the west by Herat, and Kashmir on the east; being in fact the country of the Afghans. It may be doubted if this description is very accurate; Roh seems to offer traces of the older appellation of a district of more limited extent, or Arachosia. A town called Roh-kaj is noticed by Ibn Haki not far from Ghizni."—*W.*

of troops the Emperor was compelled to yield. He appointed Ali to the governorship of a district north of Delhi, but kept two of his sons as hostages. Shortly after this Ahmed Khan, the Chief of the Abdalies, who, after the death of Nadir Shah, had united the Afghan states into one monarchy, invaded India. Ali took advantage of the embarrassment of the empire to march into Rohilcund and re-establish his sway over his own dominion; and when in the same year a new emperor mounted the imperial throne he procured an imperial firman conferring on him almost the whole of Rohilcund. He was busy establishing his authority on a firm basis when he was struck with a mortal illness. His elder sons were captives in Afghanistan, his younger sons were too young to take an active part in the administration. Summoning his chiefs around him Ali named his third son his successor as long as his elder brothers did not return, and appointed Rahmat Khan, the son of Shah Alum, to be protector or regent. He was to be assisted in the task of government by three principal chiefs. All swore on the Koran to be faithful to the interests of Ali's children and all betrayed their trust. The territory was divided among the children and chiefs, and Rahmat took the most important portion and became head of the Rohilla confederacy.

When war broke out between the English and the Vizier of Oudh, Sujah-ul-Dowlah sought the aid of the Rohillas, and the son of Rahmat Khan was despatched with six thousand men to assist him. He was present at the battle of Patna, when the Vizier's army was compelled to retire to Buxar. After the decisive victory of Buxar, Sujah-ul-Dowlah again sought the aid of Rahmat Khan to check the advance of the English. He joined the Vizier with three thousand men, and the two allies were in May 1765 defeated by General Carnac at Kura. Six years after this the Mahrattas invaded Rohilcund and plundered and destroyed all before them. The Rohilla chiefs retired into the dense forests of the Terai, where they remained inactive in their intrenchments for four months. The Vizier fearing that the Mahrattas might invade his territory advanced with some English battalions under the command of General Sir Robert Barker, the Commander-in-Chief of the Bengal Army, to the borders of Oude. Negotiations were opened with the Rohilla chiefs regarding the measures to be taken for the expulsion of the Mahrattas from Rohilcund. Hafiz Rahmat visited the camp of Sujah-ul-Dowlah, and a treaty between the Vizier and himself on the part of the Rohilla sardars was agreed upon. To give greater validity and effect to the treaty in the minds of the contracting parties, it was

executed and sworn to in the presence of the English Commander-in-Chief and countersigned by him (June 1772). It would be difficult to construct a document more simple and explicit. The Vizier undertook "*either by peace or war*" to drive the Mahrattas out of Rohilcund, and to do so again if they again invaded the land after the "rainy season." In return the Rohilla sardars promised to pay the Vizier within a little over three years forty lakhs of rupees. The Mahrattas shortly after withdrew and the Rohillas emerged from their mountain fastness.*

The treaty was signed in June; and in November, when the floods of the rainy season had subsided, the Mahrattas again advanced towards the Ganges with the intention of invading Rohilcund. It was known that Rohilcund was only regarded by them as the most accessible highway to Oude, and an English brigade at the request of the Vizier occupied his kingdom. When news arrived that the Mahrattas were approaching Ramghat where the Ganges could easily be crossed, the Oude and English troops marched to the borders of Rohilcund to check their advance, and surprised the Mahrattas just as they were on the point of crossing the river, at a ford five miles from Ramghat. Marching up the river they found a large body of the

* History of the Rohilla Afghans by Hamilton.

enemy encamped on the other bank who opened fire upon them with their heavy guns. The fire of the Mahrattas was quickly silenced, and with some haste they removed their camp to safer ground. The English crossed in pursuit but the chase was fruitless. On their return they found that Rahmat Khan had joined the Vizier. He had, in order to avoid paying the subsidy, been making overtures to the Mahrattas, but finding that, owing to the rapid and victorious movements of the English, treachery and procrastination were no longer possible, he joined Sujah-ul-Dowlah. On the English fell the task of checking the further advance of the Mahrattas and driving them from Rohilcund.* Shortly after they had been compelled by the united armies to retire beyond the borders of Rohilcund news reached them of disturbances at Poona,

* Intelligence of these movements quickened the action of the allies, and an English detachment was with all speed sent to check the further passage of the Mahrattas. A body of about 4,000 Mahratta horse were surprised in the act of crossing by a ferry some five miles below Ramghat; but on the appearance of the hostile force they retreated scatheless to the southern bank and the English pursued their march up the river to Asadpur, thereby separating the division of Besaji from that of Holkar, which, as already mentioned, had started for the Moradabad district. On arriving at the bank of the Ganges near Asadpur the British were assailed by a cannonade from the Mahratta artillery across the river. But our guns replied with such effect that those of the enemy were silenced, and the Mahrattas with some precipitation removed their camp to safer ground. On the following day Rahmat, finding further procrastination impossible joined Sujah-ul-Dowlah. It was now arranged that the English should account for the Mahrattas under Besaji, while the combined armies of Sujah-ul-Dowlah and the Rohillas should pursue

and the main body marched to the capital of the Deccan.

The Vizier now demanded from the Rohillas payment of the sum due under the treaty, but they shuffled and hesitated till at length Sujah-ul-Dowlah determined to take possession of their country as a recompense for their breach of faith. At the interview which took place at Benares, the Vizier had broached this matter to Hastings, who makes the following mention of it in his report to the Board: "The Vizier," he writes, "was at first very desirous of the assistance of an English force to put him in possession of the Rohilla country lying north of his dominions and east of the Ganges. This has long been a favourite object of his wishes, and you will recollect that the first occasion of my late visit was furnished by a proposal of this kind. He had certainly just grounds of resentment against the chiefs of this nation, who had not only failed in their engagements to pay him forty lakhs of rupees for his protection against the Mahrattas, but

the force of Holkar. Sir Robert Barker's brigade crossed the Ganges at Ramghat, but Besaji avoided an action, and decamped with such speed that the English were able to re-cross over into the Budaun district on the following day.

Here they found that, owing to mutual suspicion, and perhaps to some quarrel about the subsidy, Sujah-ul-Dowlah and Hafiz Rahmat had remained inactive. It was therefore left for General Barker to expel Holkar from Rohilcund, and marching towards Sambhal he performed that operation without the least opposition (1773).—*Gazetteer of Rohilcund—Budaun, page 113. Hamilton's Rohillas, pages 194 and 195.*

had actually supplied them with money when they appeared in arms against him. He offered to make the Company a consideration for this service of forty lakhs of rupees besides the stipulated sum for the expenses of our troops, but he afterwards laid aside this design, fearing that it would disable him from fulfilling his engagements for Corah and Allahabad. I enclose for your observation No. 10, the original agreement of the Rohilla chiefs witnessed by General Barker; No. 11, a translation of the same; No. 12, a translation of a letter which I received from Hafiz Rahmat Khan, in whose name the agreement was ratified; and No. 13, a translation of a narrative delivered to me by the Vizier in reply to it.* The measures to be pursued for his security on that quarter must therefore be determined by future occurrences. I was pleased that he urged the scheme of this expedition no further, as it would have led our troops to a distance from our own borders which I would wish ever to avoid, although there are powerful arguments to recommend it."†

* See Appendix I.

† Secret Select Committee's Proc., 4th October 1773, Vol. I, page 51.

Mill's remarks concerning Rahmat Khan's breach of faith are a characteristic example of his special pleading and inaccuracy: "The unhappy Rohillas, it seems, procrastinated and evaded, with respect to the demand which was now violently made upon them for payment of the formerly stipulated price of defence—a payment which had not been earned, since they had never been defended; which they were not able to pay, since their country had been

Hafiz Rahmat Khan in his letter makes statements totally at variance with the treaty which he signed, and puts forward a palpable falsehood when he states that the English General and the Vizier sent envoys to him "desiring that I would enter into no terms with the Mahrattas, and they would give me back my engagement for forty lakhs of rupees, and do everything both for my present and future security." * He had the temerity to conclude as follows: "But at length they left everything unfinished, and after temporizing for a long time with the Mahrattas, returned to their own homes, leaving me still a prey to the Mahrattas. You are no doubt acquainted with all these proceedings. It is a point which requires justice and consideration." † The Nawab with much greater justice accuses Rahmat Khan of breach of faith and treachery. He writes: "I also called to me Hafiz Rahmat Khan and the

repeatedly ravaged and stript; of which the exaction was in reality a fraud since the return for it was never intended to be made; which it was no wonder they were reluctant to pay to the man who was impatient to assail them, and whom the use of their money would only strengthen for their destruction." Mill loses sight of the fact that by the terms of the treaty it was agreed that the payment should be made if the Mahrattas were driven out "either by peace or war," and that they were driven out by the Vizier through the assistance of the English.

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 4th October 1773, Vol. I, page 60, Appendix page 3.

† Ditto Ditto 4th October 1773, Vol. I, page 61, Appendix page 5.

others who had taken protection under the hills, and replaced them on their former footing in the possession of their country. My friend General Barker is well acquainted with these circumstances, in whose presence they entered into an engagement for the payment of forty lakhs of rupees, and pledged their faith and religion for its performance. In the sequel they did not remain steady to this agreement, but in the height of the rains, antecedent to every other person, Zabitta Khan first went and connected himself with the Mahrattas, and Hafiz Rahmat Khan sent the holy Koran, which contains the religion of the Mussulmen, to the Mahrattas as a token of his friendship. He also gave them five lakhs of rupees and established a friendship and good understanding with them. The whole world are well acquainted that envoys from Hafiz Rahmat were with the Mahrattas, and treated with them in the above manner. Myself continuing firm and steady to my engagements, I proceeded in concert with the English troops from Fyzabad to the assistance of the Rohillas and arrived by successive marches to Ramghat. I previously acquainted Hafiz Rahmat Khan that he should make preparation, and that I should shortly arrive and act in conjunction with him. As Hafiz Rahmat Khan had entered into intrigues with the Mahrattas, notwithstanding I was near him, and the Mahrattas at a considerable distance, he

nevertheless under various pretensions and evasions drew near the Mahratta army to such a degree that the morning when I arrived with the English forces and came upon the Mahrattas, Hafiz Rahmat Khan was within seven or eight coss of them, when from necessity only he came and waited on me. I am certain that if I had been four gurries later with the English forces, he would have joined the Mahrattas and fallen upon me; and that only from my near approach he was compelled to come to me. Afterwards when the Mahrattas could not face the English forces and myself, and set out for the Deccan, Hafiz Rahmat Khan did not pay me a single daam on account of the agreement executed in presence of the General as aforementioned: nor did he treat me with that respect or present me with the customary presents, which are used amongst mankind as marks of friendship and hospitality."*

Mill asserts that Hastings inserted the paragraph regarding the Rohillas in his report because "with a view to the future, it was politic to explain that the Vizier showed at first a desire to obtain English assistance for the seizure of the Rohilla country; it was politic also to state the pretexts by which the expediency of that assistance might best appear to be estab-

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 4th October 1773, Vol. I, page 61.

lished." With regard to Hastings' remark that he was pleased that the Vizier urged the scheme of the expedition no further as it would have led our troops to a distance, Mill writes: "Yet we have it from his pen that he 'encouraged' the Vizier to the enterprise as what promised to be of the greatest advantage to the Company."* Mill also states that "It was agreed between the Nawab Vizer and the President that whenever the time convenient for the extirpation of the Rohillas should arrive, the assistance of the English should not be wanting, and that the agreement respecting the Rohillas which it had been settled between the President and Vizier might be conveniently kept out of the ostensible treaty was wholly suppressed."*

The charge brought by Mill that Hastings had withheld from his colleagues information regarding his negotiations with the Vizier, and that the agreement made by him with the Nawab respecting the Rohillas was kept out of the treaty, was answered by Hastings when it was first brought against him by Francis—"I found him" [the Vizier], he wrote to the Directors, "still equally bent on the design of reducing the Rohillas, which I encouraged, as I had before done, by dwelling on the advantages which he would derive from its success, but objecting with great force

* Mill's History of India, Volume III, page 399.

the orders of the Company restricting us from such remote schemes of conquest, to which therefore I could not assent without such conditions obtained in return for it as might obviate their displeasure and win their sanction to so hazardous and unauthorized a measure. I fear not to quote these expressions addressing myself to fair and unbiassed judges who will not infer my real sentiments from the style and argument of a political negotiation."* In commenting on a letter written by General Clavering, Mr. Monson, and Mr. Francis, Hastings wrote as follows:

"I have already observed that I informed Messrs. Lawrell, Vansittart, and Lambert, who were deputed with me by the Board, of every circumstance that passed during the whole course of the negotiation, but it was unnecessary that these circumstances should be recorded, when they had become entirely foreign to the terms of the treaty. The Rohilla expedition *was laid aside*, or more properly, it had not been adopted, for the Vizier's proposal on this subject had never been ratified. It is true an option remained with the Vizier to renew this subject, but an option also remained with the administration either to reject or assent to it. It so happened that he did renew the subject; but at the time of concluding the Benares treaty, it appeared probable to me that he would not renew it; and where was the occasion for loading our records with the particulars of transactions which had been voluntarily laid aside by the Vizier who was the interested party in them, especially as they had been unreservedly

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 8th December 1774, Vol. I, page 143.

communicated by myself and the members who had been with meto the other members of the administration in private intercourse. If he had renewed the proposal, it was then time enough to enter upon a public discussion of this matter, when it became a measure of administration and was decided upon by them. This is precisely the case with the measure in question. Advantages were drawn from the Vizier's eagerness to pursue it which were happily retained by the Company, when the object of them had been struck out of the treaty. If he never had renewed it, these advantages would have remained with the Company; when he did renew it, I thought it but common justice to point out to the Board the concessions which this consideration had induced him to grant. There were no *positive engagements* entered into relative to this matter. It remained with the Board to determine what influence these circumstances should have in their decisions, and the question 'whether the Vizier should or should not be assisted in attacking the Rohillas' remained *open and entire* for the decision of the Board. If these circumstances had some weight in the judgment of the Board, it does not follow that they were *positive engagements*. The word *secret* is next used, surely not for candid purposes, and is applied to my having withheld from the Court of Directors' information respecting the Rohilla expedition, when I had no information to communicate to them, but that the expedition was laid aside."

"In the strictures which the gentlemen of the majority make upon past transactions, having a complete view of everything that has happened, they reason upon events respecting my conduct before they had taken place, and seem to condemn me for not having seen into futurity. When the Vizier, after being so eager to adopt the Rohilla expedition,

all at once gave it up, although he had conceded part of the terms upon which it was to have been undertaken, it did not appear to me probable that he would have renewed the proposal, or that future circumstances not lying within the reach of human foresight would happen to recommend it; but the gentlemen of the majority, knowing that the Rohilla expedition was afterwards adopted, accuse me for not having entered into a full discussion and explanation of that subject, at a time when I had little reason to expect it would ever take place. I certainly thought it possible, and this is the plain meaning of the words used in my report upon the subject, *viz.*, 'that the measures to be pursued for his security in that quarter must be determined by future occurrences.' That is, if the Rohilla would pay the forty lakhs due from them and join in a scheme of defensive alliance with the Vizier, the measure to be pursued for his security in that quarter would be to afford the Rohillas protection. If, on the contrary, they gave encouragement to the enemy or refused to pay the forty lakhs, the measures to be pursued for his security in that quarter would be to drive out the Rohillas and reduce the country occupied by them within the line of his dominion."*

Hastings was both surprised and mortified to receive, shortly after his return to Calcutta, a letter from the Nawab stating "I have now determined to take posssesion of the country on the Doab, which formerly belonged to the Rohillas and is now possessed by the

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 16th January 1775, Vol. I, page 178.

Mahrattas. For this purpose I shall shortly despatch my army thither and shall also follow myself. Should I, therefore, have occasion for the assistance of the English forces to carry on my operations in that country, I desire to know what is your pleasure,—whether you will let me have those forces when I shall call for them, or you will not?"* A month later the Nawab wrote: "I have before written you several letters, which you may have received. I have now learnt that Hafiz Rahmat Khan and other sardars have intentions of taking possession of Etawah and the rest of the country belonging to the Mahrattas. I therefore write to inform you that if such is their intention, I will not put up with it, but shall undoubtedly undertake an expedition against them; for, in the first place, they have not made good a single daam of the forty lakhs of rupees, according to their agreement, and in the next they are now going to take possession of another country. This I will never submit to, and am therefore determined to punish them. During our interview at Benares we had some conversation on this subject, and it was then agreed on that I should pay to the Company the sum of forty lakhs of rupees after the expulsion of the Rohillas, and R2,10,000 monthly on account of the English brigade during my

* Secret. Select Committee's Proc., 26th November 1773, Vol. I, page 76.

operations in the Rohilla country; and that I should with the assistance of the English forces endeavour to punish and exterminate the Rohillas out of their country. If, therefore, these terms are agreeable to you, I desire to know whether you will assist me with the English forces, or you will not."*

The Select Committee came to the conclusion "that should the Vizier persist in his intentions with respect to the Rohilla country, and determine to prosecute the enterprise with steadiness to a conclusion, this Government, considering the strict alliance and egagements which subsist between the Company and Sujah-ul-Dowla, and particularly what passed between the Vizier and the President at the conference at Benares, cannot on this occasion refuse him support and assistance; that the terms proposed by the Vizier appear highly advantageous to the Company, not only on account of the sum which is ultimately stipulated as a consideration for this service, but by immediately relieving them from the heavy expense of a large part of their army. Provided, therefore, full assurance and security can be obtained of the Vizier's intention and ability to make good the many payments which will in this event be due to the Company. Resolved that the 2nd

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 26th November 1773, Vol. I, page 76.

Brigade now quartered at Dinapore be ordered to march on the Vizier's requisition."*

The Committee also agreed that the President be requested to prepare an answer to the Vizier's letters. Hastings in the answer informed the Nawab that with respect to the Doab he was his own master to act in whatever manner he should deem most fitting for the advancement or security of his own affairs, but that the orders of the Company were peremptory that he should not suffer their arms to be carried beyond the line of their own boundary and those of His Excellency, their ally. "Concerning the country of the Rohillas," Hastings wrote, "whatever was formerly proposed at Benares, that I am now equally ready to agree to—that is, the brigade which is now at Dinapore shall march whenever you require it, to join you, and proceed with you into the country of the Rohillas, which lies north of your dominions, to assist you in the entire reduction of it; and Your Excellency, on your part, will supply them monthly with the stipulated sum of R2,10,000 for their expenses, and, whenever the country shall be so far conquered that you shall remain in possession of it, although the enemy may lurk in the hills and jungles, or a few refractory zemindars, as is usual, may withhold their allegiance, and Your

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 26th November 1773, Vol. I, page 77.

Excellency shall dismiss the brigade; you will, on its departure, pay forty lakhs of rupees to the Company as a consideration for that service. To prevent future misunderstanding I have been thus explicit. I must beg leave further to add that if the expedition shall be once undertaken, it will be absolutely necessary to persevere in it, until it shall be accomplished; you will therefore reflect whether it will be in your power to make the above payments punctually with others which are already due, and whether you can resolve on going through with the undertaking. If you are not certain of accomplishing these necessary points, I must request that you will suspend the execution of your undertaking till a more favourable time."*

Some doubts having arisen concerning the regularity of the issue by the Select Committee on their own sole authority of the order directing that the 2nd Brigade should march on the requisition of the Vizier it was agreed that their proceedings together with Hastings' letter should be submitted to the whole Council. The President also laid before the Board a minute in which, after pointing out the greater probability of the Mahrattas and Rohillas joining in hostilities against the Vizier than that they should continue in war against one another, he discusses the advantage

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 26th November 1773, Vol. I, page 78.

"which would result to the Vizier, the ally of the Company, and to the Company itself, from his possession of that part of Rohilla which is the object of the expedition now proposed." "Our ally," he writes, "would obtain by this acquisition a complete compact state shut in effectually from foreign invasions by the Ganges, all the way from the frontiers of Behar to the mountains of Thibet, while he would remain equally accessible to our forces from the above provinces either for hostilities or protection. It would give him wealth, of which we should partake, and give him security without any dangerous increase of power. It would undoubtedly, by bringing his frontier nearer to the Mahrattas, to whom singly he would be no match, render him more dependent on us and cement the union more firmly between us. I must further declare that I regard as none of the most inconsiderable benefits to the Company from this measure, besides the forty lakhs held out to us, the easing them immediately of the burthen of one-third of their whole army, while at the same time it is employed usefully for their interests and conveniently for keeping up its own discipline and practice in war."*

But though Hastings was convinced of the propriety of the expedition, he doubted its expediency at

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 26th November 1773, Vol. I, page 80.

that particular time. He however confesses to the Board that he is greatly embarrassed in coming to a decision in consequence of what passed between the Vizier and himself at Benares. "The Board," he writes, "will recollect that this very country was included in the line of defensive operations which they thought fit to adopt last year in support of the Vizier, and it is now necessary to acquaint them more fully that the Vizier at the interview did propose this expedition to me, and earnestly solicited my assistance. That I regarded this request as a lucky circumstance in the negotiation, and availing myself of it as the means of purchasing the Vizier's compliance in the other measure which was the principal object of my commission, I consented to it, engaging to assist him in the enterprise on the conditions with which the Board are already acquainted. Afterwards from a suspicion of his own ability to make good so many pecuniary engagements at once as those he had come under, he himself made the proposal for suspending the Rohilla expedition, but the condition which took its rise from it, *viz.*, that the future payment of the extra charges of the army sent at any time to his assistance should be fixed at R2,10,000 per month for a brigade, was still allowed to be made an article of the new treaty; and it was further agreed that the stipulation for Corah, which I had before raised with difficulty to forty-five lakhs of rupees,

should now be made fifty in consideration of his being exempted from the additional burthen of the projected campaign and better enabled to fulfil his other payments."* Hastings felt "that a direct refusal after what passed would have an unfriendly aspect, and might admit of the construction of artifice and insincerity in our dealings with him," and for this reason, he informs the Board, "he had in the letter expressed consent to the expedition in terms which, if he agrees to them, are most likely to secure the advantages hoped from it, but which are more likely to make him relinquish the design." The Board concurred heartily with the President "in wishing to avoid the expedition proposed; without entering into a discussion of the propriety of such an enterprise on general principles, the Board see in their full force all the circumstances of doubt as to its present expediency which the President has so clearly set forth, and they are also sensible of the embarrassment which he lies under from what passed on the subject between him and the Vizier at Benares. They are equally solicitous to save the honour of the Company and watch over its interests, and for that reason they approve of the letter now before them, which seems equally calculated to save both. The conditions, if accepted, would undoubtedly

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 26th November 1773, Vol. I, page 80.

secure the greatest possible advantages from such enterprise, but they appear to them more calculated to drive the Vizier into a refusal, which is what they trust in, as its most probable and almost infallible consequence, and which they wish for as the proper result of this proposition in the present circumstances of affairs."* The only member of the Board who did not concur in the above resolution was Sir Robert Barker, the Commander-in-Chief, who was at that time engaged in a warm controversy with Hastings regarding military patronage. Sir Robert Barker objected to the resolution of the Board that "if the Vizier has the Rohilla country added to those of Oudh and the Provinces of Corah and Allahabad, he will be in possession of a revenue of nearly two crores and a half per annum, a sum that, in some future day, might render an enterprising genius a very troublesome neighbour on the north-west frontiers of the Company's dominions; although we have no present occasion to suspect the sincerity of Sujah-ul-Dowlah's attachment to our interests, yet it must not be forgotten that he is an Hindustander, or that a successor might enter the Government with very different ideas and disposition."*

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 26th November 1773, Vol. I, page 81. Mill writes: "His abilities in making out a case, though singularly great, were unable to produce unanimity, and it was not till after a long debate that

The letter which Hastings sent the Nawab did not, however, cause him to relinquish his design. He acknowledged "the receipt of the friendly letter informing him that the English brigade is either for the protection of my own dominions or to assist me in my operations against the Rohillas,"* and he requested that a positive order should be sent to the Commander-in-Chief to march the forces to the borders of Oude. It was impossible to temporize any longer. On the 14th February 1774 orders were issued to Colonel Champion to take command of the brigade marching to Oude, but even up to the last moment Hastings evidently hoped that the expedition against the Rohillas would be postponed, for we read—"As the Vizier appears completely occupied at present in his expedition into the Do-auba for the recovery (in behalf of the King Shaw Allum) of the territory seized by the Mahrattas, we imagine he will hardly find time this season to attempt anything towards the conquest he meditates

a decision in favour of the expedition was obtained. The assistance was promised on the very terms concerted and settled between him and the Vizier; and yet this President had the art to persuade his colleagues, and joined with them in a declaration to their common masters, that these terms were so favourable to the English and so burdensome to the Vizier as to render his acceptance of them improbable, and therefore to leave but little chance of their involving the English Government in a measure which the principal conductors of that Government were desirous to avoid." Vol. 3, page 571.

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 13th January 1774, Vol. 1, page 91.

of the Rohilla country before described. We think it, however, necessary to suppose the possibility of such a service taking place in describing the line of your operations." *

On the 24th of February the united forces entered the territory of the Vizier and on the 17th of April invaded the Rohilla dominions. On the 9th of May the President laid before the Board a letter from the Commander-in-Chief announcing a decisive victory over the enemy. The English Commander does justice to the bravery of the foe. "Hafiz," he writes, "and his army, consisting of about forty thousand showed great bravery and resolution, annoying us with their artillery and rockets; they made repeated attempts to charge, but our guns being so much better served than theirs, kept so constant and galling a fire, that they could not advance, and where they were closest, there was the greatest slaughter; they gave proofs of a good share of military knowledge by showing inclinations to force both our flanks at the same time, and endeavouring to call off our attention by a brisk fire on our centre." † Of the enemy about two thousand fell, many leading chiefs being amongst the number of the slain. "Stand-

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 13th January 1774, Vol. I, page 92.

† Secret Select Committee's Proc., 9th May 1774, Vol. I, page 97.

ards," writes Colonel Champion, "we have taken without number, and above fifty pieces of cannon, but what renders the victory most decisive is the death of Hafiz Rahmat, who was killed whilst bravely rallying his people to battle; one of his sons was also killed, one taken prisoner, a third returned from flight to-day, and is in the hands of Sujah."* Thus fell the great Rohilla Chief. He was endowed with great personal courage and considerable powers of statesmanship, but these qualities were neutralised by his extreme prudence and caution. His great fault was avarice, which being united to insincerity led him to be distrusted by his fellow chieftains and paved the way to his final ruin. He rose to power by betraying the solemn trust of his friend, and the only title he had to the kingdom of Rohilcund was the title of fraud. His character has been painted in glowing colours by the enemies of Hastings, but it is impossible to discover anything that would make him a hero or a benefactor.†

* Secret Select Committee's Proc,, 9th May 1774, Vol. I, page 98.

† How little the enemies of Hastings know about Hafiz Rahmat Khan is amusingly illustrated by the fact that they confounded him with Hafiz, the famous poet of Shiraz, who lived only four hundred years previously. In the Parliamentary Register there is the following passage:—

"Hafiz Rahmat, the most eminent of their Chiefs, - as famous throughout the East for the elegance of his literature and the spirit of his poetical compositions (by which he supported the name of Hafiz) as for his courage, was invaded," &c., &c.—*Parliamentary Register, No. LXXVI, page 205.*

In the letter which Colonel Champion sent to the Board announcing his victory he severely criticised the conduct of the Nawab and his troops during the engagement. He wrote: "No sooner was the enemy irrecoverably broke than they pushed after them and got much plunder in money, elephants, and camels, &c., &c., &c. Their camp equipage (which was all standing, and proves that we came on them by surprise) with whatever effects they could not carry off, fell a sacrifice to the ravages of the Nawab's people, whilst the Company's troops in regular order in their ranks most justly observed, 'We have the honour of the day and these bandits the profit.'" † The Board, in their letter congratulating the Chief on his victory, remarked :— "So decisive an instance of the superiority of the Company's arms cannot fail of reviving in all its force the reputation they formerly acquired in Industan, and which ten years of peace had doubtless in some degree weakened in the minds of the princes of the country." They complimented the troops on their valour, and the General on his skill and the order and discipline he had maintained among his men. They expressed their special satisfaction that the General had "from the beginning opposed and at last obtained a stop to be put to the devastation of the Rohilla country by

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 9th May 1774, Vol. I, page 97.

the army of the Vizier, a mistaken policy altogether incompatible with the design of the war and repugnant to humanity, and we have a sensible pleasure in testifying our entire approbation of your conduct in this respect." *

The military conduct of the expedition was entirely left to the Commander-in-Chief, but the power of directing the services to be performed was left to the Vizier. This division of authority led to friction which rapidly grew into personal hostility between the two men. Every letter received from Colonel Champion was charged with complaints against the Nawab. He was stated to be avaricious, cowardly, and cruel, vices unfortunately common to most oriental despots. The Commander-in-Chief was "greatly afraid that the Vizier's behaviour to the family of the Nawab Hafiz Rahmat and to the inhabitants of his country † will render our connection with him reproachful to us and tend to lessen that reputation of our justice which had heretofore prevailed in these countries." ‡ This called forth a manly and vigorous rebuke from the Governor. Hastings wrote: "It never could have been suspected by the Board that their orders to you would have tied up your hands from protecting the

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 9th May 1774, Vol. I, page 101.

† Appendix II.

‡ Secret Select Committee's Proceedings, 23rd May 1774, Vo. I, page 104.

miserable, stopped your ears to the cries of the widow and fatherless, or shut your eyes against the wanton display of oppression and cruelty. I am totally at a loss to distinguish wherein their orders have laid you under any greater restraint than your predecessors. No authority which the Board could have given could be capable of preventing the effects you mention since they could give you no control over the actions of the Vizier further than the weight and influence of your counsel and advice." *

In a letter to Mr. Middleton, who had been appointed Resident at the Court of Oudh, Hastings remarked :—

"Colonel Champion complains of the conduct of the Vizier in suffering and even ordering his troops to ravage the country, and in his cruel treatment of the family of Hafiz Rahmat. This is a subject on which I cannot write to the Vizier. It might widen the breach between him and the Commander-in-Chief, and probably influence the Nawab to some private revenge on the unhappy remains of Hafiz Rahmat's family. I desire, therefore, that you will take an immediate occasion to remonstrate with him against every act of cruelty or wanton violence. The country is his and the people his subjects. They claim by that relation his tenderest regard and unremitted protection. The family of Hafiz have never injured him, but have a claim to his protection in default of that of which he has deprived them. Tell him that the English manners are abhorent of every species of inhu-

* Memoirs of Warren Hastings, by Gleig, Volume I, page 425.

manity and oppression, and enjoin the gentlest treatment of a vanquished enemy. Require and entreat his observance of this principle towards the family of Hafiz. Tell him my instructions to you generally, but urgently enforce the same maxims, and that no part of his conduct will operate so powerfully in winning the affections of the English as instances of benevolence and feeling for others. If these arguments don't prevail, you may inform him directly that you have my orders to insist upon a proper treatment of the family of Hafiz Rahmat; since in our alliance with him our national character is involved in every act which subjects his own to reproach, that I shall publicly exculpate this Government from the imputation of assenting to such a procedure, and shall reserve it as an objection to any future engagements with him, when the present service shall have been accomplished." *

Colonel Champion, experienced in the tactics of war, unfortunately thought that he was also a master of the tactics of diplomacy. He entered into negotiations with Fyzoollah Khan, the only Rohilla Chief who had not surrendered, and who proposed to pay the Nawab twenty lakhs of rupees if he would reinstate him. He also offered a large sum of money to the Company if they would use their influence with the Vizier to grant him his request. But writes Colonel Champion:— "His Excellency said he would not give him back a span of his country for a crore of rupees; that he had

* Memoirs of Warren Hastings, by Gleig, Volume I, page 438.

no objection to my protecting Fyzoollah Khan's person, but that the treasure must be considered as the property of His Excellency independent of the English." * Champion was desirous that Hastings should accept the money offered by Fyzoollah Khan, and should bring pressure to bear on the Vizier to restore his fief in Rohilcund. But Hastings, who has been so often accused of lending English troops to the Vizier merely for the sake of lucre, refused to assent to the proposals made on the broad ground "that they are diametrically opposite to the principle on which the Rohilla expedition was on our part undertaken, which was not merely on account of the pecuniary acquisition of forty lakhs of rupees to the Company, for, although this might be an accessory argument, it was by no means the chief object of the undertaking. We engaged to assist the Vizier in reducing the Rohilla country under his dominion, that the boundary of his possessions might be completed by the Ganges forming a barrier to cover them from the attacks and insults to which they are exposed by his enemies either possessing or having access to the Rohilla country. Thus our alliance with him, and the necessity for maintaining this alliance, so long as he or his successors shall deserve our protection, was

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 3rd June 1774, Vol. I, page 107.

rendered advantageous to the Company's interest, because the security of his possessions from invasion in that quarter is in fact the security of ours. But if the Rohilla country is delivered to Fyzoollah Khan, the advantages proposed from this alliance will be totally defeated." *

Fyzoollah Khan was reputed to have, according to the most moderate computation, seventy-five lakhs of rupees in ready money, and Colonel Champion was greatly incensed at the Vizier's declaration that the treasure must be considered as his property. The express stipulation that the English troops should serve for a certain fixed sum had barred them from having a share of the booty captured. Colonel Champion considered this to be a wrong both to himself and his men. He wrote to the Board: "By their gallantry they have reduced this country, and, of course, gained the Company half a million of money; they have, moreover, been the enrichers of Sujah-ul-Dowlah to an immense amount; before their faces he has seized these riches, and he has not even thanked them for their services. These matters, gentlemen, are in my opinion of the highest importance, and deserve your most serious consideration. The good temper and forbearance of your army under such temptation is matter of the greatest admiration, and a

* Memoirs of Warren Hastings, by Gleig, Volume I, pages 433 and 434.

source of infinite satisfaction to me, but I must confess I am afraid that if some mark of favour and gratification for their services is not manifested, it may be somewhat dangerous ever to try an experiment of this kind again, or to put the temper and patience of any part of your troops so much to the proof."* Hastings refused to consider the suggestion so skilfully conveyed. "The very idea," he states in a private letter to Champion, "of prize-money suggests to my remembrance the former disorders which arose in our army from this service, and had almost proved fatal to it. Of this circumstance you must be sufficiently apprized, and of the necessity for discouraging every expectation of this kind among the troops. It is to be avoided like poison."† Champion never forgot the rebuke. It rankled in his mind long after and betrayed itself on more than one occasion.

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 3rd June 1774, Vol. I, page 107.

† Secret Select Committee's Proc., 8th March 1775, Vol. II, page 274.

CHAPTER II.

THE FIRST GOVERNOR-GENERALSHIP OF INDIA.

The termination of the Rohilla war coincides with the close of Hastings' administration as Governor of Bengal. By an Act passed in the previous year the constitution of the Company had been greatly changed, and the Government of India had mainly passed into the hands of the ministers of the Crown. India was to be ruled by a Governor General of Bengal, Behar and Orissa, and four Councillors. The Governor of Bengal was converted into a Governor General in order to give emphasis to the fact that the other presidencies were made subordinate to Bengal. The first Governor General and Councillors were, according to the Act, to be nominated by Parliament and to hold office for five years, but after that the patronage reverted to the Company subject to the approbation of the Crown. The Regulating Act of 1773 also empowered the King by Charters, or Letters Patent, to erect and establish a Supreme Court of Judicature at Fort William to consist of a Chief Justice and three other Judges, the new Court to have authority over all civil, criminal, admiralty and ecclesiastical jurisdiction given to it by Charter. Warren Hastings was nominated by the Act

the first Governor General; Barwell, Clavering, Monson, and Philip Francis were the first four Councillors. Barwell had excellent parts which had been improved by long administrative experience; Clavering had neither ability nor tact, and he never learnt the art of governing his temper. He owed his appointment entirely to Parliamentary influences. Monson was a brave old soldier of no political capacity. The most remarkable member of the new Council was Philip Francis. His character has been sketched with skill and fidelity by Lord Macaulay. "Junius," he writes, "was a man clearly not destitute of real patriotism and magnanimity, a man whose vices were not of the sordid kind. But he must also have been a man in the highest degree arrogant and insolent: a man prone to malevolence, and prone to the error of mistaking his malevolence for public virtue! 'Doest thou well to be angry'? was the question asked in old times of the Hebrew prophet. And he answered, 'I do well.' This was evidently the temper of Junius; and to this cause we attribute the savage cruelty which disgraced several of his letters. No man is so merciless as he who, under a strong delusion, confounds his antipathies with his duties. All this we believe might stand with scarcely any alteration for a character of Philip Francis." Had Macaulay studied the minutes and letters now printed he would have had no reason

to correct or modify his judgment regarding Philip Francis. The minutes, like the letters of Junius, display the same art of assuming a great moral and political superiority and the same art of evading difficulties, insinuating unproved charges, and imputing unworthy motives. The minutes, like the letters of Junius, are distinguished for their clear and vivid style, and are charged with envenomed and highly elaborated sarcasm. In them is displayed the art which Francis possessed to supreme perfection of giving the arguments on his side their simplest, clearest, and strongest expression, in disengaging them from all extraneous matter, and making them transparently evident to the most cursory reader.*

On the 26th October 1774 the new Council met for the first time and then commenced that long quarrel which after distracting British India was renewed in England, and in which all the most eminent statesmen and orators of the age took an active part. Hastings laid before his colleagues an able minute on the revenue and politics of the country. He explained the mode he adopted for the collection of the revenue. He earnestly offered his advice "for the continuation of this system with such alterations only as the late

* History of England in the Eighteenth Century, Lecky, Volume III, page 236.

change in the Government has rendered indispensably necessary."* In discussing the political system he dwelt on the Benares treaty and the Rohilla war which he defended on the ground both of State policy and justice. His new colleagues, who had been only a week in India and had not had the time to master even the elements of Indian polity, condemned the treaty and denounced the war as impolitic and unjust. At the same time they professed their inability to arrive at any satisfactory conclusions respecting either on the mere minute of the Governor General, and they formally demanded the correspondence which had passed between him and Mr. Middleton, the Resident at the Court of Oudh. As Hastings had requested Middleton to write to him without reserve, and the letters contained a great deal that was private and confidential, Hastings declined to produce them. But he freely consented to furnish his colleagues with every sentence in the letters which might throw light on the matter under discussion. His colleagues, however, declared that they had only discovered on landing that "the reduction of the Rohillas was completed, and that our army about the beginning of this month was stationed upon the skirts of the mountains of Thibet, at a

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 25th October 1774, Vol. I, page 115.

place so distant from our frontier and so considerably to the north of Delhi, that it is not comprehended in any of the ordinary maps of Industan, and in this situation other lights into the nature of the negociation and engagements with Sujah-ul-Dowlah beyond any that we have yet received are undoubtedly necessary. * * * * We think a complete communication of the original correspondence between the late President and the Company's Resident at the Darbar and the Commander-in-Chief of the Company's troops now in the field indispensably requisite for the information of the Board."† Hastings adhered to his determination not to produce the letters, and in his minute to the Court of Directors, dated 3rd December 1774, he justified his action on the ground that there were few persons in the service of any considerable trust or rank with whom he had not had private correspondence, and that it would be a dishonourable breach of confidence to disclose the contents of these letters. He wrote: "My predecessors have ever followed the same rule, and I am persuaded would have thought it a dishonourable breach of confidence had they inserted on the records of the Company any letters which had been addressed to them as extra-official and private, without the consent of the writers of them. Lord

† Secret Select Committee's Proc., 28th October 1774, Vol. I, page 121.

Clive, Mr. Verelst, Mr. Cartier, General Smith, and General Sir Robert Barker are able to contradict me if I have misquoted their practice, and I shall be glad to appeal to them for the truth of it if there can be a doubt on the subject. A circumstance exactly in point to the present matter in dispute happened in the course of Colonel Smith's correspondence with the Select Committee in 1766, when by some mistake the subject of a private letter from the Colonel to the President was only alluded to in a letter from the Select Committee, upon which occasion the Colonel asserts his sentiments of the sacred rights of private correspondence in the following words: 'I have been made accountable to a public Board for an unprejudiced discussion of facts which ought never to have transpired beyond the breast of the right honourable person to whom, and whom only, they were addressed'; and the Select Committee, by their silence, acquiesced in those sentiments.'* Hastings added: "One reason alleged by the majority for the demand which had with so much perseverance been made for Colonel Champion and Mr. Nathaniel Middleton's letters was that without them, and specially without those I withheld from them, their knowledge of the State and circumstances of the Rohilla war, which was to en-

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 8th December 1774, Vol. I, page 152.

able them to judge of the propriety of continuing the army in that quarter, or to determine its removal, would be incomplete, yet they had neither taken time to read the series of the former political reports which I had recommended for their perusal, nor the letters of Colonel Champion and Mr. Nathaniel Middleton, with which I had promised to furnish them, although these were surely as necessary for their information as the private letters addressed to me the contents of which they could not know, and I had declared to them contained no information on the points on which they wanted it."* In a letter to Lord North, Hastings wrote: "The immemorial usage of the service had left the whole correspondence with the country powers in the hands of the Governor, and Mr. Middleton in that light could only receive his orders from and address his letters to me. In the course of his correspondence I had encouraged him to speak his sentiments freely under the assurance of their never becoming the subject of public record in cases which I judged improper for such a communication. When, therefore, Mr. Monson moved for the whole being laid before the Board I could not consistently either with honour or good faith comply. I urged these reasons, but they were overruled, and Mr. Middleton was immediately called

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 8th December 1774, Vol. I, page 154.

from his station, and thus a declaration made to all Industan that my authority was extinct, and that new men and new measures would henceforth prevail. I do not know what use my opponents may make of my refusal to show those letters. I declare I have submitted every part to their perusal which was necessary for their information on public affairs, and as to those I have withheld, Your Lordship will, I hope, one day judge of the propriety of my conduct in this respect, it being my intention, as soon as Mr. Middleton arrives, to collect my entire correspondence with him, and to offer it for Your Lordship's inspection."*

On Hastings' refusal to deliver up his private letters it was resolved by the majority, consisting of the new Councillors, that Mr. Middleton should be recalled, and that the negotiation with the Vizier should be committed to Colonel Champion or to the officer who on the receipt of the orders should chance to be first in command of the brigade in the field. Hastings protested against the resolution as "it proclaimed the annihilation of my authority in that branch of the Government in which the Company for obvious political reasons have ever thought it necessary to invest their Governor with the ostensible powers, and which in their very first orders to the new Administration they have directed

* Memoirs of Warren Hastings, by Gleig, Volume I, pages 474 and 475.

should be continued to be conducted through him."* The protest, however, fell on the ears of men who had made up their minds to follow a definite course of action. At the next meeting of the Board they resolved that the Commander-in-Chief should be ordered to demand from the Vizier the forty lakhs due for the service of our troops in the Rohilla campaign, and all other sums which might be due upon his other engagements. If the Vizier was unable to comply with these demands the Commanding Officer might accept not less than twenty lakhs in partial payment, and securities for the remainder in twelve months. In case the Vizier should refuse to comply with these demands the Commanding Officer was within fourteen days after the receipt of these instructions to retire with the army under his command and withdraw it into the Company's territories. It was also resolved "that further orders be sent to Colonel Champion or the Officer commanding the brigade that after having finished the negotiations for the money now due, he do immediately withdraw the whole of the forces under his command within the limits of the province of Oudh, and that unless the Vizier should require the continuance of the troops for the defence of his original dominions with the provinces of Corah and Illa-

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 8th December 1774, Vol. I, page 156.

habad, he return with them to the cantonments of Dinapore."*

Hastings regarded the immediate demand of payment as harsh and impolitic, and considered the sudden recall of the troops as a breach of treaty and a violation of the faith of the Company. He wrote to the Directors—"They have disregarded the faith of our engagements which even in the most violent revolutions have ever been transmitted as sacred from one Government to that which has succeeded it; they have exposed the conquest which the British arms have acquired for the Vizier to be wrested from him, with the loss of our military reputation; they have risked the loss of the pecuniary resources which were stipulated for the Company as the fruits of their successes; and they have precipitately withdrawn the brigade from its station where its whole expense is borne by the Vizier, to become again a heavy and useless burthen upon ourselves."†

Not content with weakening the dignity and authority of Hastings by the recall of his representative in Oudh, not content with endangering the safety of the kingdom of our ally by the recall of the troops,

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 28th October 1774, Vol. I, page 122.

† Ditto ditto 8th December 1774, Vol. I, page 156.

the majority proceeded to denounce the Rohilla war as impolitic and unjust, and ordered an enquiry to be instituted into the manner in which it had been conducted, in the hope of fastening upon Hastings the responsibility for every outrage perpetrated by the Vizier and his troops. The event proved very different to what they anticipated. It is instructive to compare the description of the state of Rohilcund at the close of the war as described by those who took a part in the campaign and the picture drawn by Macaulay. Few portions of his brilliant work have achieved a more successful notoriety. It is read wherever English letters have penetrated ,and it may be said to be stereotyped in the English mind. It has created a deep and lasting prejudice against the great man who founded our Indian Empire, and to it is mainly due the charge so often brought by fervent politicians that India was acquired by enormous crimes. Macaulay in his essay on Warren Hastings writes—"Then the horrors of Indian war were let loose on the fair valleys and cities of Rohilcund. The whole country was in a blaze. More than a hundred thousand people fled from their homes to pestilential jungles, preferring famine and fever and the haunts of tigers to the tyranny of those to whom an English and a Christian Government had for shameful lucre sold their sub-

stance, and their blood, and the honour of their wives and daughters." Colonel Leslie, the first witness summoned before the Council, stated: "I would beg leave to distinguish between the real inhabitants and the acquired ones. By the acquired ones I mean the Rohillas or Afghans who conquered the country and became the masters of it. I believe the Gentoo inhabitants were not oppressed. The ryots have been as much cherished by him as they ever were under any former Government, except at the time of the march of the army through their country, but they returned to their plough immediately and seemed to be as happy as ever."* The witness admitted that a certain portion of the country was in flames—a very different matter to the whole country—and added: "The native inhabitants after I left Bissowly between that and Simbu were all at their habitations and had returned to their cultivation of the country; when I went down towards the banks of the Ganges it was highly cultivated, but about Puttergur which was the place of arms and retreat of the Rohillas before they retired to Loll Dang as their last resource, there was no cultivation but of sugar."†

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 19th December 1774, Vol. I, page 162.

† Diito ditto ditto December 1774, Vol. I, page 162.

Regarding the outrages committed by the Vizier, Colonel Leslie declared that he had heard many "vague reports regarding the matter and certain particular ones which were attended with such circumstances that I could scarce give any credit to from the situation of the parties. There was a particular one at Bissowly: one of the daughters of the Rohilla Chief of that place whom they said he had committed violence upon, and that she in consequence poisoned herself, and knowing the situation of the Vizier at that time I thought it almost impracticable, which made me give very little credit to the stories which I heard at the time of such a nature." On being cross-examined by General Clavering as to the treatment the Rohillas received at the hands of the Nawab, Colonel Leslie stated: "The prisoners who fell into the hands of the Vizier, which I believe to be very few, are now entertained in his service; there are some of the sons of Hafiz Rahmat, two particularly whom I know, and have often seen riding in his suite. He generally took one of these out with him all the time he was at Bissowly; their appearance was good, and I think the same of the rest of his cavalry, and they appeared contented, but no doubt he kept a watchful eye on them."*

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 19th December 1774, Vol. I, pages 163 and 164.

Mr. Francis then asked the witness the following question:

Q.—"Did the Vizier make any suitable allowance for the maintenance of the families of the conquered chiefs or were they abandoned to distress and misery for want of the common necessaries of life at any time?"

A.—"The Vizier has I am told settled allowances, jaghirs upon most of them, but I believe not sufficient to keep them in that way of life they are brought up in; but upon my word I don't know what distresses they have been brought to as they are confined within forts, but the report of the world says they suffer great distress."*

Major Hannay was the next witness. In answer to the first question regarding the oppression stated to be exercised by the Vizier, he said: "To the best of my knowledge I saw no signs of oppression to the inhabitants of the new conquered country; but from particular enquiries which I had an opportunity of making of the country people, they said they had met with no treatment that they could complain of; that from the treatment they had met with they had no reason to fear greater severity from the Vizier than their former masters."† This is a very different picture to that painted by Macaulay, who describes Hastings folding his arms and looking on while their villages were

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 19th December 1774, Vol. I, page 166.

† Ditto ditto 19th December 1774, Vol. I, page 167.

burnt, their children butchered, and their women violated. The Rohillas were not, as Macaulay depicts them, innocent men, fighting for their liberty, but military adventurers who only half a century previously had conquered the country. Major Hannay in his evidence stated: "I have learned from many people that it is only within fifty years that the Rohillas have become masters of the country to the north of the Ganges; that they were originally Afghans, came to Industan under a sardar named Daud Khan, and that they conquered that country from the Hindoos, and that since that time they have followed no other profession than that of arms, and the ancient Hindoos have cultivated the country."* No doubt villages were burnt as they have been burnt in every war, but Major Hannay informed the Board that both the Vizier and the Rohillas were concerned in burning the villages. "I was informed that some days before our arrival at Shawbad, the Rohillas had burned some villages towards Mamdy in the Vizier's ancient dominions."* As to the country being reduced to a desert and a hundred thousand people flying to the jungles, Major Hannay stated: "At the time that I went upon an expedition from Bissowly to Sumbul, Meradabad, and Rampore, the country appeared to be in

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 19th December 1774, Vol. I, page 167.

good cultivation; the inhabitants were employed in tilling it. It is in general one of the best cultivated countries I have seen in Industan, and very well inhabited, and the people appeared to be busy at this time as if there had been a profound peace, and under no kind of apprehension from the conquerors."*

In the course of his cross-examination by Francis, Major Hannay was asked :—

Q.—"Do you know or believe that the Vizier entered the zenanas of the wives of any of the Rohilla Chiefs"?

A.—"It is impossible for me to answer with any degree of precision from the zenanas being spacious places, consisting of many apartments, many of which are not occupied by women. I never knew of his going into any of them at Pellybeet. I can positively say he did not, for he never went into the town of Pellybeet. At Bissowly I have heard that he went frequently into the zenana there, but to the best of my remembrance it was after the women were removed to camp, and that he was fitting up the zenanas for the reception of his own family during the time he was going to Puttergur."†

Regarding the Rohillas, whose character has been painted in such glowing colours by Burke, Mill, and Macaulay, Major Hannay stated: "Their national character has in general been a want of sincerity, to elucidate which I beg leave to mention one instance.

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 19th December 1774, Vol. I, page 167.

† Ditto ditto 19th December 1774, Vol. I, page 168.

At the time that Muhammad Ali was their chief he prevailed upon the Almora Raja and the other hill Rajas to assist him in his rebellion against the King, Mahomed Shah; that they did assist him with 20,000 men, that upon the approach of the imperial army they found themselves so much inferior in point of strength that they judged it imprudent to give him battle and prevailed upon the Almora Raja to admit them into his country, the access to which is so strong, that a small number of troops may defend the pass against a very numerous army. They continued there till an invasion of the Mahrattas required that the army of the empire should be returned against them. As soon as ever the army of the empire quitted the Rohilla country, then the Rohillas seized the country of the Almora Raja, their ally, carried away most of the handsomest women of the country captives, amongst others the daughter of the Raja, whom Ali Muhammad took himself, and she was the mother of the present Fyzoollah Khan. This is mentioned as an instance of their insincerity; farther it is a proverb in Industan that they pray with one hand and rob with the other. Their manner of making war is much the same as is practised all over Industan; towards their conquered enemies they have generally been bloody; those whom they have saved they commonly made captives of; and in the late campaign I have been very well assured

by many of the prisoners that their intentions towards us were very bloody, that they had orders to give no quarters."*

The next witness called was Colonel Champion, the bitter foe of the Vizier and of Hastings. He described no burning villages, nor thousands of people flying from their homes to pestilential jungles, but he stated: "The native inhabitants are still remaining and the country is in a flourishing condition." Colonel Champion on being asked whether he had heard the report that brutal outrages had been offered to the wives and daughters of the Rohillas of the highest rank, said: "I did hear such a report, but as to the grounds I have none sufficient to prove the accusation, but the report of it was made to me."†

The evidence of Colonel Leslie, Major Hannay, and Colonel Champion, a most hostile witness, removes what Macaulay stated to be "a lasting stain on the fame of Hastings and of England." It is no doubt a great crime to trample out a nationality, but of this

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 19th December 1774, Vol. I, page 168.

† Ditto ditto 28th December 1774, Vol. I, page 173.

Note.—Mill writes: "There can be no doubt that the Rohillas, whose troops were among the best and bravest of Hindustan, were a barrier against the Mahrattas." He loses sight of the fact that the Mahrattas had twice defeated the Rohillas and devastated the country.

crime in our conquest of India we are guiltless. In India we found men belonging to diverse races, speaking diverse tongues, fighting for the supremacy. We found no nation. The Mussulman power was effete long before the battle of Plassey. Brave in battle, the followers of Mohammed were intolerant and proved themselves unfit to govern. All chance of Hindoo supremacy was lost on the field of Panipat. The Mahrattas were brave marauders, but were destitute of the gifts with which nature has endowed the races meant to rule. The Rohillas were soldiers of fortune from Afghanistan, who had only half a century before their defeat conquered the fair valleys and cities of Rohilcund. Hastings, in his minute to the Directors, states: "I must beg leave to take exception to the word '*nation*' applied to the Rohillas. They are a tribe of Afghans or Pathans, free booters who conquered the country about sixty years ago, and have ever since lived upon the fruits of it, without contributing either to its cultivation or manufactures, or even mixing with the native inhabitants. The Rohillas are Mahometans, the natives Hindoos, and have only changed masters."* Colonel Leslie, in his evidence, remarked that the Rohillas "made the inhabitants till the ground, left them a substance, and kept the rest to

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 16th January 1775, Vol. I, page 177.

themselves."* And Major Hannay informed the Board that since the time the Rohillas conquered the country, "they have followed no other profession than that of arms and the ancient Hindoos have cultivated the country."†

The Rohilla war was no brave struggle of patriots fighting for their native land; it was a struggle of marauders fighting to maintain their supremacy over a people whom they were incapable of protecting from other marauders. The Mahrattas had laid waste the country and driven the Rohillas into their mountain fastnesses. At this grave crisis in their affairs the Rohilla chiefs appealed for assistance to the Nawab of Oudh, the ally of England, and he consented to lend his aid on the express condition that if the Mahrattas were compelled to retire from the country with or without war, the Rohillas should pay a certain sum of money. The treaty was signed and ratified by the Commander-in-Chief of the English troops. The Mahrattas were compelled to retire, but they invaded the country next year and were again driven off by General Sir Robert Barker. The Vizier then demanded from the Rohilla chiefs the sum they had stipulated by treaty to

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 19th December 1774, Vol. I, page 163.

† Ditto ditto 19th December 1774, Vol. I, page 167.

pay. They resorted to evasions and excuses till his patience was exhausted and he resolved to annex their country as a punishment for their breach of faith. The Nawab determined to ask his ally to aid him in the enterprise. The first proposition of the Rohilla war came from the Vizier and General Barker, and Hastings was most unwilling to accede to it. But he and his colleagues after long and mature deliberations came to the conclusion that on the annexation of Rohilcund to Oudh depended not only the tranquillity and safety of Oudh but the tranquillity and safety of our own possessions. Rohilcund was the gate of Oudh, and as Hastings wrote to the Directors: "If the Mahrattas, either by the defeat, or, which was as likely to happen, by the desertion of the Rohillas to their cause, should gain a footing in that country, nothing could oppose their entering into the province of Oudh and laying it waste, in spite of any attempts of our forces to prevent them. The map which accompanies this will demonstrate this truth more powerfully than any verbal argument. It was not to be supposed that the Mahrattas, whose ambition for some years past had aspired to universal conquest, and who had extended their arms from the centre of the Balaghat to the northern extremity of Hindustan, should sit down contented when they had added Doab, Corah, and Illahabad to their dominions. On the contrary, there

was every reason to apprehend, and it was publicly reported in their own camp, that they would next carry their operations into the country of the Vizier and even into the Company's own possessions."* Hastings held the opinion, and it was supported by the evidence of Colonel Leslie, Major Hannay, and Colonel Champion, that the Vizier's state joined to Rohilcund would form *"a complete compact state shut in effectually from foreign invasions."*† He, however, clearly saw that convenience does not justify aggression, for he wrote to the Directors: "I own that the convenience of possessing the Rohilla country was not sufficient reason for invading it. I never said it was; but if they had afforded a just provocation for invading these countries, and we saw advantages in invading it, though neither cause was alone sufficient to produce that effect, yet both united would certainly justify it, and the most rigid speculators would approve so fair a conclusion."‡ A breach of a treaty has always been regarded by nations as a just provocation for war.

Hastings and his colleagues determined to aid the Vizier, and for the services of the English troops they

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 8th December 1774, Vol. I, page 141.

† Ditto ditto 16th January 1775, Vol. I, page 184.

‡ Ditto ditto 16th January 1775, Vol. I, page 184.

agreed to accept a payment of forty lakhs. Macaulay observes: "England now descended far below the level even of these petty German princes who about the same time sold us troops to fight the Americans. The Hussar-mongers of Hesse and Anspach had at least the assurance that the expeditions on which their soldiers were to be employed would be conducted in conformity with the humane rules of civilised warfare. Was the Rohilla war likely to be so conducted? He well knew what Indian warfare was. He well knew that the power which he covenanted to put into Sujah-ul-Dowlah's hands would in all probability be atrociously abused: and he required no guarantee, no promise that it should not be so abused. He did not even reserve to himself the right of withdrawing his aid in case of abuse however gross."* The German princes had no interest, direct or indirect, in the American war. The English lent their troops to an ally to punish certain chiefs for a breach of a treaty to which the English Commander-in-Chief had affixed his signature, and to annex a territory which these chiefs had gained possession of by the sword and could no longer defend from a foe whose ambition menaced the safety of our dominions. Hastings never concealed the fact that the payment of forty lakhs to the Company greatly influenced his decision. Writing to the

* Macaulay's Essay on Warren Hastings.

Directors he said: "I shall be always ready to profess that I do reckon the probable acquisition of wealth among my reasons for taking up arms against my neighbours. I never in any period of my life, though long engaged in public affairs, gave my consent for taking up arms in an *unjust cause*, and I never shall but in cases of very notorious enormity give my consent to take up arms in an *unprofitable one*."* Regarding the charge first brought by Francis and repeated and embellished by Macaulay that Hastings took no guarantee from the Vizier that the war should be conducted in conformity with the humane rules of civilised warfare, Hastings at the time wrote: "It is a perversion of facts to say that 'the British arms and honour were absolutely at the Vizier's disposal,' that 'an absolute surrender has been made of the honour and interest of the Company.' We agreed to assist him in subduing the Rohillas. It was necessary to draw the line between the authority of the Vizier and our Commanding Officer. The service to be performed was entirely the Vizier's; it was therefore consistent and unavoidable that he should direct the objects of it; but the execution of military operations was expressedly vested in our Commanding Officer; of course the safety of our army and the honour of the British

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 16th January 1775, Vol. I, page 184.

name and arms were entirely confided to his conduct and discretion."*

It was the Commanding Officer, Colonel Champion, to whom, as Hastings pointed out the honour of the British name and arms was entirely confided, who either through personal animosity or the desire of persuading the Board to grant him the power which he repeatedly solicited to entirely command the Vizier, first brought the graver charges against the Nawab which have tarnished the honour of the British name. The evidence however of Colonel Leslie and Major Hannay, strictly corroborated by the letters and de-

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 16th January 1775, Vol. I, page 182

Hamilton's History of the Rohilla Afghans, page 268. Mill lays considerable stress on the use of the word *exterminate* in the official correspondence. Regarding this Hastings wrote: "I am here charged with a concealed design formed in concert with the Vizier to *extirpate* the Rohillas; and much use is made of this discovery both by the majority in the letter before me and by Colonel Champion in his vindication. The word in the original language of the letter which is here translated to *extirpate* means expel or remove. In another passage of the letter it is joined with a word which does literally express to extirpate or root out, and both passages mean no more than that it was the intention of the Vizier to expel or remove the Rohillas from the country which they occupied, without suffering the smallest vestige of their power to remain in it. In this sense I most certainly did agree to assist the Vizier, and so did the late President and Council, nor can I conceive how the war could have been undertaken with any other object. The majority know as well as myself that the Rohillas are not the people of the country, but a military tribe who conquered it, and quartered themselves upon the people without following any profession but that of arms, or mixing in any relation with the native inhabitants."—*Secret Select Committee's Proc., 8th March 1775, Vol. II, page 268.*

positions of Colonel Champion himself, proves that the Vizier was unjustly traduced in the reports which prevailed of the enormities committed by him in the course of the war. Macaulay, with the tendency to exaggerate which so seriously impairs the value of his work as a historian and critic, observes: "Their military resistance crushed, his (Hastings) duties ended; and he had then only to fold his arms and look on while their villages were burnt, their children butchered." A certain number of villages were burnt. This, as Hastings admits, was both barbaric and impolitic, but too much justified by the practice of war established among the nations of the East; and he might have added nations of the West. The statement made that children were butchered, is absolutely due to the imagination of Macaulay and to his love of contrast. Macaulay also infers that a wholesale violation of the women took place by the soldiery. But the charge was never brought against the soldiery; it was brought against the Vizier himself, and respecting this Hastings wrote: "The only authority which the gentlemen of the majority had for this horrid accusation at least I recollect no other, was a letter from Mr. Nathaniel Middleton, who mentioned it only as an instance of the falsehoods which had been propagated to injure the Vizier, adding that the unhappy victims of his brutal lust, who could not survive their

shame, but had put a violent end to their own lives, were still living, and that the Vizier had never seen them."* History furnishes no more striking example of the growth and vitality of a slander. The Rohilla atrocities owe their birth to the malignity of Champion and Francis; their growth to the rhetoric of Burke; and their wide diffusion to the brilliancy and pellucid clearness of Macaulay's style. A close and minute study of the evidence demonstrates that a certain number of villages were burnt and that the prisoners were ill subsisted. A hundred thousand people did not fly to pestilential jungles, but about seventeen or eighteen thousand Rohillas with their families were expelled from Rohilcund, and Hindu inhabitants, amounting to about seven hundred thousand, remained in possession of their patrimonial acres and were seen cultivating their fields in peace.

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 16th January 1775, Vol. I, page 181.

CHAPTER III.

DEATH OF THE VIZIER OF OUDE—NUNDCOOMAR.

At a meeting of the Board on the 6th February 1775, a letter was read from the Resident at Oudh announcing the death of the Vizier. The majority of the Council considered all the treaties made with the Nawab as purely personal, and consequently invalid on the death of one of the contracting parties. They therefore determined to make a heavier bargain with the Vizier's successor. At a meeting of the Board on the 3rd March it was discussed and determined what part of the Nawab's dominions should be included in the new treaty. Francis stated: "My opinion is that we may with propriety guarantee to the present Nawab of Oudh for his life all the countries guaranteed to the late Vizier by the treaty of Illahabad, except the dominions of Chayt Singh. I think that this guarantee may be also conditionally, and *pro tempore*, extended to the countries of Oudh and Illahabad, until we shall be informed whether the treaty of Benares be ratified or disproved by the Court of Directors. I do not think it safe or prudent to enter into any engagement that may eventually carry the Company's forces

beyond the limits of the countries I have mentioned." Hastings observed: "My answer to the question is short, as it can be of no use; we ought in my judgment to guarantee to the Nawab of Oudh the Subehdary of Oudh, the districts of Corah and Illahabad, and the country lately conquered from the Rohillas, but no more. I do not wish to see the Company's forces carried within the line of the Rohilla country for its defences; I believe that an engagement to defend the country for him would render it unnecessary. I fear he may lose it. We shall in that case have a greater burden imposed upon us in the defence of the Nawab of Oudh, and he be less furnished with means of discharging his engagements with us."* It was, however, "resolved that the Board will agree to guarantee to the Nawab Mirza Amaunay the province of Oudh and conditionally those of Corah and Illahabad until the pleasure of the Court of Directors on the treaty of Benares be known."† The Governor General then proposed the following question: "Whether it shall be made a condition of the new treaty that Raja Chayt Singh shall exercise a free and independent authority in his own dominions, subject only to the payment of his tribute;"‡ and it was resolved in the

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 3rd March 1775, Vol. II, pages 262 and 263.

† Ditto ditto 3rd March 1775, Vol. II, page 264.

‡ Ditto ditto 3rd March 1775, Vol. II, page 264.

affirmative. The Governor General then proposed: "Whether it shall be made an article in the treaty that, in consideration of the engagement to be entered into by this Government to guarantee the possessions of the Nawab of Oudh as before resolved, he shall cede and make over to the Company the whole or any part of the tribute due from the zemindar of Ghazipore."* Francis stated: "I consider the cession to the Company of the whole tribute paid by the zemindar of Ghazipore to the late Nawab as the first and most essential condition of a treaty with the present Nawab: the advantage gained by the zemindar will be also very considerable, as it has always been my opinion that his authority in his own Government should be left free and uncontrolled; as long as this advantage is preserved to him, he must consider it as his interest to be the tributary of the Company rather than of the Nawab."*

Colonel Monson and General Clavering, as was their wont, supported Francis, but Barwell strongly protested against the exaction. He observed: "The Company, it is obvious, never intended that upon the necessities of our allies we should grasp at any part of the territories they possessed. The son of a man with whom we were so lately intimately connected,

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 3rd March 1775, Vol. II, page 264.

upon a supposition of his standing in need of our assistance, ought not in my opinion to be stripped of any part of his paternal territory."* Hastings was of opinion "that a demand should be made of a moiety of the revenue paid by the zemindar of Ghazipore, but I do not think that we ought to insist on this article or that the Nawab's refusal to consent to it should prove an impediment to our proceeding on the treaty."† It was resolved "that the demand be made for the tribute of Ghazipore, but that it be not considered an absolute and indispensable article in the negociation with the Nawab." The Governor General proposed the next question: "Whether the subsidy to be stipulated for the assistance of our troops to the Nawab of Oudh by the proposed treaty shall continue on the present footing of ₹2,10,000 per month for a brigade, or what other sum shall be demanded." And he expressed an opinion that the present subsidy was sufficient and that it ought not to be increased. "I doubt," he stated, "whether a larger sum would in reality prove a gain to the Company." It was however "resolved that an increase of the subsidy be demanded from the Nawab to make it equal to the expense of the troops."† Thus we find the states-

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 3rd March 1775, Vol. II, page 264.

† Ditto ditto 3rd March 1775, Vol. II, page 265.

man who has been branded as the violator of treaties and the oppressor of nations by extortions and exactions doing his utmost to prevent his colleagues from extorting any concession from a native prince inconsistent with a former treaty.

The majority of the Council, no longer content with attacking Hastings' public policy, now lent their aid to a grave imputation on his personal integrity. On the 11th March 1775 Francis informed "the Board that he this morning received a visit from Raja Nundcoomar, in which the Raja delivered to him a letter addressed to the Governor and Council and demanded of him, as a duty belonging to his office as a Councillor of this State, to lay it before the Board. Mr. Francis conceiving that he could not, consistently with his duty, refuse such a letter at the instance of a person of the Raja's rank, did accordingly receive it, and now lays it before the Board, declaring at the same time that he is unacquainted with the contents of it. Mr. Francis further begs leave to observe that he received this letter publicly in the presence of a considerable number of persons, and that the Raja's verbal request was interpreted to him by these different persons."*

The letter laid before the Board professed to relate the connection of Nundcoomar with the company. It

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 11th March 1775, Vol. II, page 298.

was due to him, he stated, that Meer Jaffir had waged war against Meer Cassim after the massacre of Patna; and after the defeat of Meer Cassim and Sujah-ul-Dowlah at Buxar he had obtained "from His Majesty the King Shah Alum the Subahs (of Bengal, &c.) for the Nawab Jaffir Ali Khan;" during the Nawab's lifetime he had faithfully distributed the revenue; after the death of Meer Jaffir he was deprived of his office by certain Englishmen who "for views of private advantage raised Mahomed Reza Khan to the post;" he reminds the Board that for the space of seven years Mahomed Reza managed the affairs of the Subah of Bengal; "what the measures were which he pursued in the administration of the country, the balances which he fraudulently wrote off, his violence and oppressions upon his own masters and upon the ryots and his trade in grain, by all which his master's house and the whole country were desolated, are well known to all." Against Nundcoomar himself Mahomed Reza could bring no charge: "as nothing of the kind had been committed by me, he was able to produce nothing." It was Nundcoomar who assisted Hastings when he was appointed Governor in prosecuting Mahomed Reza Khan and Shitab Roy, and drew an account of their embezzlements which showed that Mahomed Reza Khan had appropriated upwards of 305 lakhs (£3,052,695) and Shitab Roy 90 lakhs (£900,000).

Mahomed Reza Khan offered 10 lakhs (£100,000) to Hastings and two lakhs (£20,000) to him (Nundcoomar), and Shitab Roy offered four lakhs (£40,000) to Hastings and one lakh to Nundcoomar. These offers he reported to Hastings who refused them. Soon after, he remarks, Hastings set Mahomed Reza at liberty and "entirely dropt the inquiry into his embezzlements and malpractices." "Why this extraordinary favour was so suddenly shown, the Governor can best assign the reasons."* Shitab Roy was reinstated in office. "The motives of these proceedings will best be understood from Mr. Hastings himself."† After insinuating some other charges against Hastings, Nundcoomar adds: "Thus far I have written in general terms. I shall now beg leave to offer a more particular and circumstantial statement of facts." He then states that at various times in the year 1772 Hastings had received the sum of three lakhs and fifty-four thousand rupees from himself and Munny Begum "for procuring Raja Goordass's appointment to the Niabut and causing Munny Begum to be made the superior of the family."‡ It is difficult to read the letter of Nundcoomar without agreeing with Lord Thurlow that "a more extraordinary or a more

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 11th March 1775, Vol. II, page 300.
† Drfto ditto 11th March 1775, Vol. 11, page 301.
‡ Ditto ditto 11th March 1775, Vol. 11, page 303.

insolent production never appeared undoubtedly, nor one which carried falsehood upon the face of it more strongly."

After the letter had been read through, Hastings observed: "As Mr. Francis has been pleased to inform the Board that he was unacquainted with the contents of the letter sent into the Board by Nundcoomar, that he thinks himself justified in carrying his curiosity further than he should have permitted himself without such a previous intimation, and therefore begs leave to ask Mr. Francis whether he was before this acquainted with Nundcoomar's intention of bringing such charges against him before the Board." Francis replied: "As a member of this Council I do not deem myself obliged to answer any questions of mere curiosity. I am willing, however, to inform the Governor General that I was totally unacquainted with the contents of the paper I have now delivered into the Board till I heard it read. I did apprehend in general that it contained some charge against him. It was this apprehension that made me so particularly cautious in the manner of receiving the Raja's letter. I was not acquainted with Raja Nundcoomar's intention of bringing in such charges as are mentioned in the letter."*

At a meeting of the Board held on the 13th March 1775, a further letter from Nundcoomar was received

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 11th March 1775, Vol. II, page 303.

and read. After referring to his former letter he states: "What is there written I mean not in the least to alter: far from it, I have the strongest written vouchers to produce in support of what I have advanced, and I wish and entreat for my honour's sake that you suffer me to appear before you to establish the fact by an additional incontestable evidence."* Nundcoomar was too well acquainted with official etiquette and oriental custom not to know that his request was an act of gross impertinence, and that to grant it would be an insult to the Governor General and the death-blow to his prestige and authority in the eye of every native in Bengal. But Nundcoomar knew when he made the request that it would be pleasing to the majority and certain to be granted. He had been in intimate communication with Colonel Monson, and immediately after his letter had been read Colonel Monson proposed "that Raja Nundcoomar be called before the Board." Hastings upon this proceeded to write a minute in which he declared that he would not suffer Nundcoomar to appear before the Board as his accuser. "I know what belongs to the dignity and character of the first member of this Administration. I will not sit at this Board in the character of a criminal, nor do I acknowledge the members of the Board to be my judges. I am induced on this occasion to make

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 11th March 1775, Vol. II, page 304.

the declaration that I look upon General Clavering, Colonel Monson, and Mr. Francis as my accusers. I cannot press this in the direct letter of the law, but in my conscience I regard them as such, and I will give my reasons for it."* Hastings goes on to show that Nundcoomar was only a tool in the hands of the majority, "that he was guilty of great insolence and disrespect in the demand which he made of Mr. Francis, and that it was not a duty belonging to the office of a Councillor of this State to make himself the carrier of a letter which would have been much more properly committed to the hands of a peon or hercarrah, or delivered by the writer of it to the Secretary himself."† He points out that Francis acknowledged that it contained a charge against him but if the charge was false it was a libel. ‡ "It might have been false for anything that Mr. Francis could know to the contrary, since he was unacquainted with the contents of it. In this instance therefore he

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 11th March 1775, Vol. II, page 305.

† Ditto ditto 13th March 1775, Vol. II, page 305.

‡ Ditto ditto 13th March 1775, Vol. page 306.

"The term of the expression here is peculiar. It implies an admission that the charge was true, though it might have been false, but this can hardly have been the writer's meaning. I read it rather as an argument founded on a concession (for the sake of argument) that the charge was true."—*"The Story of Nundcoomar," by Sir James Fitz-James Stephen, Volume I, page 53.*

incurred the hazard of presenting a libel to the Board. This was not a duty belonging to his office as a Councillor of this State." Hastings proceeds to inform the Board that he had been long acquainted with Nundcoomar's intention of making the attack upon him. He writes: "I was shown a paper containing many accusations against me, which I was told was carried by Nundcoomar to Colonel Monson, and that he himself was employed for some hours in private with Colonel Monson explaining the nature of these charges." He adds—"I do not mean to infer from what I have said that it makes any alteration in the nature of the charges were they delivered immediately from my ostensive accusers, or whether they came to the Board through the channel of patronage, but it is sufficient to authorise the conviction which I feel in my own mind that these gentlemen are parties in the accusation of which they assert the right of being the judge." Hastings closes the minute by stating his inflexible determination not to suffer the indignity of allowing Nundcoomar to accuse him before the governing body of which he was the head. "The Chief of this administration, your superior, gentlemen, appointed by the Legislature itself, shall I sit at this Board to be arraigned in the presence of a wretch whom you all know to be one of the basest of mankind? I believe I need not mention his name, but it is Nund-

coomar! Shall I sit to hear men collected from the dregs of the people give evidence at his dictating against my character and conduct? I will not. You may, if you please, form yourselves into a Committee for the investigation of these matters, in any manner which you may think proper, but I will repeat that I will not meet Nundcoomar at the Board nor suffer Nundcoomar to be examined at the Board; nor have you a right to it, nor can it answer any other purpose than that of vilifying and insulting me to insist upon it."*

Monson requested that the Governor General would inform the Board from whom he had his information respecting the visit Nundcoomar paid to him. Hastings refused to give up the name, because he would not expose his informant to the vengeance of the majority. He added, however, that Barwell had received similar information at the same time. Barwell informed the Board "that he was apprised of it, and received a copy of the same paper that the Governor laid before the Board." The paper was entered by the Board after the consultation. It is substantially the same as the letter laid before the Board by Francis, though in it Nundcoomar makes no mention of having himself bribed Hastings. Incorporated in the paper is a

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 13th March 1775, Vol. II, page 306.

letter purporting to be written by Munny Begum, which is identical with both the letters produced by Nundcoomar. Monson said: "As the Governor General has not thought proper to acquaint the Board from whom he received the information with regard to my conversation with Nundcoomar, I shall take no further notice of it." He added, "I do hereby declare that the Governor and Mr. Barwell likewise have been totally misinformed, for I never heard nor saw any paper in Persian or any other country language which contained to the best of my knowledge any accusation against the Governor General.*" This, Sir James Stephen remarks, admits by not denying a conversation with Nundcoomar, and suggests that Monson did "see or hear" a paper in English.

The motion of Monson to call in Nundcoomar being put to the Board, Hastings again protested against it. He said, "I do not understand the question to be whether Nundcoomar shall be called before the Board, but whether I shall be confronted with him, since the same effect may be produced, as I have declared before, by a Committee of the Board without my presence." It was resolved "that Nundcoomar be called before the Board, and the Secretary is ordered

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 13th March 1775, Vol. II, page 306.

to summon him accordingly."* Then occurred the following scene:—

THE GOVERNOR GENERAL.—"I declare the Council now dissolved and I do protest against any acts of it as a Council during my absence as illegal and unwarranted."

MR. FRANCIS.—"I beg leave to ask the Governor General whether he means to quit the chair."

THE GOVERNOR GENERAL.—I shall not answer your question, because I do not think it is sufficiently defined. I quit the Council.

MR. BARWELL.—"I think the Governor said he dissolved the Council; it is now 5 o'clock in the evening. The Governor, as I understand him, did not say "I quit the Council, but that I leave it." I esteem the Council as dissolved, and unless I receive a summons agreeable to the usual form from the Governor General, whose office still exists, and is not vacated, I do not propose to partake in the debates.

Mr. Barwell withdraws from the Board.

General Clavering, in compliance with the resolution of the majority, having taken the chair Nundcoomar was called in, and Colonel Monson moved that he be desired to deliver to the Board what he has to say in support of his charge against the Governor General. He replied: "I am not a man officiously to make complaints, but when I perceived my character, which is as dear to me as life, hurt by the Governor's receiving into his presence Juggut Chund and Mohun

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 13th March 1775, Vol. II, page 307.

Pershaud, who are persons of low repute, and denying me admittance, I thought it incumbent upon me to write what I have. Everything is contained in the letter which I have given in, besides which I have papers which, if the Board orders me, I will deliver up." Being called upon for these papers he delivered the translation of a letter from Munny Begum, dated 2nd September 1772. In it the Begum states that in gratitude for her advancement to the Nizamut she offered Hastings a present of a lakh of rupees. Hastings refused, but when she pressed the matter he said that Nundcoomar had promised two lakhs. "I guessed, my friend, that this two lakhs was a part of the three lakhs about which I wrote to you in a letter I despatched with Kiam Beg and of which I sent you word by Juggut Chund."* The Begum proceeds to state that she feared if she said anything about the matter "all that your kindness had done for me would be entirely destroyed and lose its effect." She therefore sent word to the Governor that she had given Nundcoomar a general authority "to do whatever was judged requisite and expedient for my advancement and the fooling of my enemies," and that she considered herself bound to discharge what Nundcoomar prom-

* Sir James FitzJames Stephen remarks: "This allusion was not explained by Nundcoomar, nor did he produce any letter as being the one referred to."—"*The Story of Nundcoomar*," *Volume I, page 56.*

ised. "I therefore begged that he would accept one lakh of rupees here, and told him that I would draw upon you for the other lakh which you would deliver to him at Calcutta. I was so fortunate to meet with the Governor's concurrence in this proposal. Your interest and mine are the same, and we are partners of each other's prosperity and adversity. Presuming upon this, I request that you will lend me upon honour the sum of one lakh of rupees, which you will be kind enough to pay to the Governor when he returns to Calcutta. I am raising one lakh of rupees which I shall here present to the Governor, and shall repay the sum with which I depend upon you supplying me in a few days by the means of Raja Goordass. I earnestly entreat that you will not upon this occasion entertain any doubt of me."* The letter closes with a strong injunction to secrecy.

Nundcoomar being asked if he possessed the original of the paper, produced what he said was the original of the translation. Mr. Auriol, the Assistant Secretary, being asked to look at the characters on the seal and inform the Board what they are: "he informs them the characters are Persian and express the name of Munny Begum." Sir John D'Oyly, the Acting Persian Translator, having now arrived, was

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 13th March 1775, Vol. II, page 309.

called in and shown the seal. "He also declares it to be Munny Begum's." This expression, as Sir James Stephen remarks, shows how ill-fitted the Council were for taking evidence. "D'Oyly's statement goes much further than Auriol's, but the writer of the consultations seems to have considered them equivalent to each other." The moonshee to the Persian Translator being asked whether another letter from Munny Begum which was produced by Sir John D'Oyly from the Persian office was in the same handwriting as that delivered by Nundcoomar, replied that it was not, but "that the seal of the letter is Munny Begum's seal, and that the direction and body of the letter appear to be in the same hand." It was observed by the Board "that the letter which has been given in by the Raja was written two and a half years ago, and that the letter produced by Sir John D'Oyly was written only a few days ago." The spirit shown by such a remark is noticeable. The Council, who had taken upon themselves judicial functions as soon as a difficulty appears in Nundcoomar's case, suggest an answer to it instead of inquiring into its weight.*

Nundcoomar, who had requested to be summoned before the Board because he had the strongest written vouchers to produce in support of what he advanced,

* The Story of Nundcoomar, by Sir James FitzJames Stephen, Volume I, page 58.

on being asked if he had any more papers to produce, replied—"I have no more papers." He was then further questioned whether the Governor General or any other person on the part of the Governor General had attempted to obtain from him the original letter. He replied—"the Begum applied to me for it through Cantoo Baboo, the Governor's banian. I gave it into Cantoo Baboo's hands to read it, and on being refused the original, he desired that he might take a copy of it to send to the Begum. I told him he might copy it in my presence, but it being then late in the evening he said he would defer copying it till another day."* The questions obviously suggest that Nundcoomar must

*"The only questions put to Nundcoomar by the Council were either trivial or were questions which he must have suggested himself, though if they had allowed themselves time to study the letter said to be written by the Begum, and to compare it with the written accusation of Nundcoomar, the Council must have perceived that on several points there was urgent need of inquiry. The story told in the letters does not on its face agree with the charge made by Nundcoomar. Nundcoomar said he had given Hastings in gold 1,04,105 rupees and that the Munny Begum had given him at Moorshedabad a lakh, and had caused Nur Singh, Cantoo Baboo's brother, at Cossimbazar, to pay him a lakh and half more, making in all 3,54,104 rupees.

"The letter says that the Munny Begum was to pay two lakhs, and that she was raising one lakh to pay to Hastings at Moorshedabad, and it begs Nundcoomar to pay the other lakh ts Hastings at Calcutta, and promises to repay him.

"Upon this Nundcoomar should have been asked whether he did what the Munny Begum asked him, and whether the 1,04,105 rupees which he said he gave in gold to Hastings at Calcutta was the lakh which the Munny Begum asked him to advance? If he said yes, his statement and the statement in the Begum's letter were in direct conflict; for, according to the letter, the total amount paid or caused to be paid by the Begum was two lakhs, and according

have been in previous collusion with the majority or some member of the majority, for there was nothing to suggest it in his previous letters or statements. Its object was to furnish an excuse of offering a fresh insult to Hastings by summoning his head native secretary before the Board. He was summoned to attend, but replied—"The Governor is at present here, and I am with him. He prevents me, for which reason I cannot go. When the Council is complete, if I am summoned I will attend."* The Council held "that he

to his statement the amount was three lakhs and a half. If he said no, two questionse aros, namely, first on what consideration the 1,04,105 rupees in gold were paid, and, secondly, how the letter of the Begum could be reconciled with his accusation, the letter stating that the Begum was to pay one lakh at Moorshedabad, and expressing a wish to borrow another from Nundcoomar to be paid at Calcutta, and the accusation stating that one lakh was paid at Moorshedabad, and another lakh and a half to Nur Singh at Cossimbazar, the suburb of Moorshedabad? I do not say that these questions might not have been satisfactorily answered, but I do say that they ought tohave been asked, for they arise upon matters patent on the face of the document accepted by the Council. Apart from this the majority of the Council did not observe the most obvious and common precautions. They took no steps to ascertain the authenticity of the letter attributed to the Munny Begum beyond comparing the inscriptions on two seals. They did not even impound the alleged original, but returned it to Nundcoomar. They did not even send for the persons alleged by Nundcoomar to have delivered and received the bags of gold, nor did they ask Nundcoomar a single question as to the time when, and the place where, the gold was delivered, the persons from whom he got so large a sum, the books in which he had made entries about it, the place and time of his alleged conversation with Hastings on the subject, or any of the other obvious matters by which his truthfulness might be tested."—"*Story of Nundcoomar*," *by Sir James FitzJames Stephen, Volume I, pages 60–62.*

* Secret Select Committee's Progs., 13th March 1775, Vol. II, page 310.

was guilty of a high indignity to this Board." Nundcoomar was further questioned whether he himself was present when the money was given to Hastings' servants, and he replied in the affirmative and stated that he was accompanied by certain servants of his own. All were present, he mentioned, in Calcutta, except one who was at Moorshedabad. On being questioned whether he was sure that the servants received the money on account of the Governor, he replied—"They undoubtedly took it for the Governor. I asked the Governor if it had reached him, and he said, it had." This closed the examination of Nundcoomar, an examination entirely conducted not to elicit truth but to extract answers damaging to the accused. The Board did not cross-examine Nundcoomar as to the time and place where the gold was delivered, the persons from whom he got so large a sum, the books in which he had made entries about it, the place and time of his alleged conversation with Hastings on the subject, or any of the other obvious matters by which his truthfulness might be justified. They did not examine Nundcoomar as to the grave discrepancies between his accusation and the letter of the Begum. But on the evidence of Nundcoomar, an avowed accomplice, who was known to be the bitter foe of Hastings, the Board came with indecent haste to the conclusion "that the several sums of money specified in Maha-

raja Nundcoomar's letter of the 8th March have been received by the Governor General, and that the said sums of money do of right belong to the East India Company."* It was resolved "that the Governor General be requested to pay into the Company's treasury the amount of those sums for the Company's use."

It was "ordered that the proceedings of the Board and all the papers relative to Maharaja Nundcoomar's charge against the Governor General be delivered to the Company's attorney, that he may lay them before counsel for their opinion how to proceed in recovering for the Company's use the several sums of money which the Governor General has received from Maharaja Nundcoomar or Munny Begum for services done them through his influence." The law officers of the Company in Bengal did not recommend any prosecution in India, but advised the Board to transmit all the documents and evidence to the Company, who might, if the matter was worthy of their notice, file a bill against Hastings and compel a discovery. "These documents," said Lord Thurlow, "arrived at a time when it certainly was the anxious wish of the Minister to take any fair and reasonable ground he could for the removal of Mr. Hastings. The papers were all

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 13th March 1775, Vol. II, page 311.

submitted to the law officers of the Company, who declared that the information of Nundcoomar, even upon the *ex parte* case before them, could not possibly be true. The reasons for that belief were assigned at length. The Directors, though a majority of them were very well disposed to oblige the Minister, concurred with their law officers, and all that rubbish and trash remained unnoticed from 1776 to the year 1789, when, as Your Lordships know, it was repeatedly mentioned to you by the managers, as containing proofs of the corruption of Mr. Hastings, and it was very properly rejected by the Court. It was never pretended by the managers, that they had evidence to go a step beyond this rejected information of Nundcoomar."

The accusation brought against Hastings by Nundcoomar formed part of the seventh article of impeachment against him. The minute which he wrote at the table of the Board was regarded by his accusers as bearing marks of conscious guilt. The learned judge, whose statement of the case is a masterpiece of comprehensive exposition, writes—"It certainly bears marks of strong excitement, and though I should not go so far as Sir Gilbert Elliot and Burke in thinking it inconsistent with innocence, I think it suggests that there was something to explain."* The matter which Hastings did not explain was the fact that of the three

* The Story of Nundcoomar, by Sir James FitzJames Stephen.

and a half lakhs Nundcoomar accused him of receiving from Munny Begum he had received one and a half lakhs as a sumptuary allowance, which was entered in the public accounts of the Nawab's treasury. In the May following (1775) when the Board deputed Mr. Goring to examine the disbursements of various sums in several departments at Moorshedabad, and to deprive Munny Begum of her office and authority, she was questioned regarding the transaction and declared that "every Governor coming to Moorshedabad received two thousand rupees a day in lieu of provisions, beyond that she had not given a single cowrie, and every payment would appear on the record." At the trial of Warren Hastings the managers of the impeachment having summoned the auditor of the India Office, he read from a book of public accounts a statement of the allowance made at Moorshedabad to Lord Clive first and next to Mr. Verelst when they were Governors which confirmed the truth of the Begum's declaration that every Governor at Moorshedabad received the same allowance as Hastings. It would, no doubt, have been wiser if Hastings had stated in his minute that he had received a lakh and a half of rupees as a sumptuary allowance; but the minute, it must be borne in mind, was written in the Council Chamber at a moment of great excitement. Hastings had to encounter the deliberate and guarded attacks of his enemies by the

instant and unpremeditated impulse of his own judgment. "Do not," he writes to his masters, "wonder, therefore, Hon'ble Sirs, if my behaviour in any part of these disputes shall appear to you defective or improper. I am not yet conscious of any impropriety in it, but I think that on many occasions I could have provided myself with a much completer plan of defence had I been allowed the same leisure and tranquillity to form it as my opponents possessed in concocting that of their attacks upon me."

Burke inveighed bitterly against Hastings for calling Nundcoomar a miscreant. "If, therefore," he said, "Raja Nundcoomar was a man who (it is not degrading to your Lordship to say) was equal in rank, according to the idea of the country in which he lived, to any peer in the house, as sacred as a bishop, of as much gravity and authority as a judge, and who was prime minister in the country in which he lived, with what face can Mr. Hastings call this man a wretch, and say that he will not suffer him to be brought before him." Hastings had better opportunities than Burke of forming an estimate of the character of Nundcoomar, and had solid reasons for describing it in harsh language. Thirteen years before Nundcoomar brought his accusations aganist Hastings, Hastings had been employed in investigating a charge of forgery brought against Nundcoomar.

Certain traitorous letters were intercepted and brought to Calcutta, but they proved to be forgeries. Hastings was appointed to enquire into the matter, and his report is now published for the first time.* He came to the following conclusion: "From several depositions and the circumstances herein presented the Board will judge on whom to fix the forgery of the letters in question. One observation it remains upon me to make, that a fact of this kind, in which the intervention of more than one person is not immediately required, can scarce ever admit of a positive and incontestable proof, though the several consequent and relative facts may be sufficiently proved, and point out in the most evident manner the main spring which set them in motion. In this light regarding the enquiry before us, I must give it as my opinion that it appears pretty clearly that there was a design on foot to compass the ruin of Ramchurn; that subsequent thereto the letters forged in his name were intercepted; that the man to whose charge they were entrusted was a servant of Nundcoomar's, and that Sudder odin (a servant of Nundcoomar's) did foretell the disgrace of Ramchurn, and was (by his own declaration afterwards) privy to the forgery of the letters. I say from these circumstances already proved, I am of opinion that the letters were written and intercepted by the

* This will be found in the Appendix III.

contrivance and direction of Nundcoomar, in order to fix the charge of a traitorous correspondence upon Ramchurn." When Hastings was first appointed Governor of Bengal, Nundcoomar sent letters to him at Madras in the names of the Nawab's uncle and Munny Begum. The letters were filled with invectives against Mahomed Reza Khan and recommendation of himself. Hastings afterwards found that Munny Begum had no knowledge of these letters, and she declared the letter stated to be written by her to be a forgery though it bore her seal. It was only natural after the experience of the past that Hastings should regard the letter produced by Nundcoomar as another forgery, though like the letter forwarded to Madras it bore the Begum's seal. "I make no doubt of proving it," he wrote to a friend, "it bears most evident symptoms of it in the long tattling story told with such injunction of secrecy and a word to the wise pertinently added to the end of it, when the sole purpose of the letter was to order the payment of a lakh of rupees, and Nundcoomar's son and son-in-law were with the Begum, and daily informing him of all that passed."*

But even if Nundcoomar had borne an unblemished character, Hastings would have been justified in refusing to submit to the disgrace and mortification of

* Memoirs of Warren Hastings, by Gleig, Volume I, page 515.

the head of a Government being accused in person during the sitting of the Council over which he presided. Such a procedure must have brought his office into contempt and injure the dignity of station which a man has interest to preserve. It moreover was unnecessary for the purpose either of eliciting truth or of promoting justice. A Committee of inquiry, consisting of the Council without Hastings, would have been equally efficacious for these purposes. Hastings did not dispute the right of his colleagues to make an inquiry into the charges of corruption brought against him, nor did he, as Mill states, "raise any pretences for stifling inquiry." He only pointed out the mode of conducting it which would be least injurious to the dignity and authority of the Government. As Hastings wrote to the Directors—"Had the majority been disposed to accept of my proposition of appointing a Committee for prosecuting their inquiries either into these or the Ranny's allegations, they might have obtained the same knowledge and all the satisfaction in this way that they could have expected from an inquisition taken by the Board at large, their proceedings would have had the appearance at least of regularity, and my credit would have been less affected by them. The only point which they could possibly gain by persisting in bringing such a subject before the Board was to gain a public triumph over me, and

expose my place and person to insult.*"

The animosity of the majority against Hastings and their desire to insult and degrade him in the most public manner was strikingly illustrated by their treatment of his secretary and agent, Cantoo Baboo. He was a man of high caste and good family and for many years had taken a leading part in the administration. As the Secretary of the Governor General he was "considered universally as the first native inhabitant of Calcutta."† Because, acting under the orders of the Governor General, he did not appear at their first summons before the Board, it was proposed to place him in the stocks, a punishment, as Hastings remarked, "so disgraceful to a man of character and credit as would be an extension of rigour equal to death." General Clavering, in proposing the motion, observed that Hastings had said that if Clavering meant anything personal to him he would make him answer for it with his life. On this Hastings observed: "I said if he attempted anything in his own person and by his own authority, I would oppose it with my person, or personally oppose it at the peril of my life."‡ The discussion growing dangerously warm

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 22nd April 1775, Vol. II, page 348.

† Ditto ditto 20th March 1775, Vol. II, page 320.

‡ Ditto ditto 20th March 1775, Vol. II, page 324

Francis moved an adjournment of the Board, and it was agreed that the Board do adjourn accordingly.

On the 20th of April at a meeting of the Board, at which the majority only were present, a letter was received from Hastings in which he informed them that "as his attendance at a meeting of the justices at the house of Sir Elijah Impey was required, he requested General Clavering to take his place and direct the despatch of such business as may require it." The majority, after mentioning that they had heard from Mr. Fowke that a charge of conspiracy against that gentleman and his son was being investigated by the justices, stated, "we think it proper to acquaint you that we mean to continue in Council until we shall be apprised of the subject and issue of that inquiry, as we conceive that a conspiracy at the investigation of which you and Mr. Barwell think fit to attend while this Council is sitting must be of great moment if not interesting to the safety of the State. We flatter ourselves that you will be pleased to inform us, as soon as possible, of the circumstances and result of the enquiry in which you and Mr. Barwell are now engaged."*

Hastings in reply wrote:—"Last night I received a letter signed by the Chief Justice and the Judges of the Supreme Court, informing me

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 20th April 1775, Vol. II, page 344.

that a charge had been exhibited upon oath before them against Messrs. Joseph and Francis Fowke, Maharaja Nundcoomar and Radachurn for a conspiracy against me and others; that they had summoned the parties to appear this morning at 10 o'clock at the house of Sir Elijah Impey, and requested my attendance. The like notification was also made to Mr. Barwell. In consequence of this intimation, we have both judged it indispensably incumbent upon us to give our attendance. I am sorry that you should have thought it necessary to continue in Council until you shall be informed of the subject and issue of this enquiry which, I presume, you will perceive to have no relation to the safety of the State, nor to any circumstance that requires your present attention."*

The charge of conspiracy was due to some accusations brought against the accused by one Kamal-ud-din.† The day previous this man had gone to

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 20th April 1775, Vol. II, page 345.

† "The prosecution of Nundcoomar for conspiracy was regarded by the Council, and was afterwards represented by Burke and Elliot, as a counter-stroke to Nundcoomar's attack upon him, and no doubt it was so, but why, with Kamal's evidence before him, Hastings was not to take the matter into Court I cannot understand."—"*Story of Nundcoomr*," *Vol. I, page 89.*

Impey stated before the House of Commons that "it was in evidence that Mr. Palk, Judge of the Adalat, had confined Nundcoomar, and that it was notorious that Mr. Hastings had ordered him to be released. This of itself was sufficient to prevent any native inhabitant of Calcutta from commencing a prosecution against him." On this Sir James Stephen remarks:—Palk's evidence, if he gave any, is not in the report of the trial. The evidence of

Hastings and complained that Nundcoomar and Mr. Fowke had compelled him by threats to sign a petition stating that he had bribed Hastings and Barwell, and they had had also forced him to acknowledge the correctness of a certain account. Hastings referred Kamal-ud-din to the Chief Justice, and Sir Elijah Impey and the other Judges acting in the capacity of Justices of the Peace, summoned the parties and held an examination of the witnesses and defendants. They discharged the son of Fowke and asked Hastings, Barwell, and Vansittart if they meant to prosecute the others and gave them a night to come to a decision. On the 23rd Hastings, Barwell, and Vansittart declared their intention to prosecute Fowke, Nundcoomar, and Radachurn for conspiracy and bound themselves over to do so, the defendants being admitted to bail. Hastings resolved on the prosecution "because," as he wrote to his friends, "in my heart and conscience I believe both Fowke and Nundcoomar to be guilty." At the assizes all the defend-

Farrer and Boughton Rouse, given before the Impeachment Committee after Impey's defence, does not mention this, and is hardly consistent with it. I think, therefore, that Impey must have been mistaken in his assertion." Mr. Beveridge points out that though Palk did not give evidence, Kamal-ud-din did, and he was sufficient authority for Impey's statement. "When was this?" "It was about two months before Mr. Palk confined the Maharaja."—*The Trial of Maharaja Nundcoomar Bahadur for forgery pulished by authority of the Supreme Court of Judicature in Beugal. London: T. Cadel, MDCCLXXVI, page 11.*

ants were acquitted of the charge of conspiracy against Hastings; Radachurn was acquitted, and Nundcoomar and Fowke were convicted on the charge of conspiracy against Barwell. The sentence on Fowke was fifty rupees fine. No sentence was passed on Nundcoomar because at the time he was lying in the common gaol under sentence of death for having committed forgery.

Nundcoomar in the letter accusing Hastings of bribery which was read before the Board complained that "Mohun Pursaud is admitted by the Governor to private conferences both in town and at his gardens." This Mohun Pursaud was attorney to a certain Bolakee Dass, a banker or native shroff, whose bond or deed Nundcoomar had been found guilty of uttering knowing it to be forged. The deed purported to be the acknowledgment of a debt due to Nundcoomar and contracted some years before by the shroff. The banker died in June 1769, and on the settlement of his affairs a few months after his decease, Nundcoomar's bond was, with the other claims on the estate, settled by the executors. On the bond being paid Nundcoomar cancelled it by tearing it downwards at the top for a couple of inches. This document and others relating to the deceased banker were lodged in the Mayor's Court as a Court of Record. In the year

1772 a suit was instituted in the Court of Kachari or country Court against Nundcoomar for more than a lakh of rupees said to be due to the estate of the banker on account of bonds of the Company. Nundcoomar was committed to prison for contempt of Court and released by Hastings. The Court recommended that the case should be referred to arbitration, but Nundcoomar at first refused to give his assent to this course being adopted, and when he did consent a dispute arose as to arbitration. Matters were in this condition when the Supreme Court of Judicature arrived in Bengal. About a month after their arrival Mr. Farrer, who had arrived about the same time and had been admitted as an advocate of the Supreme Court, was informed by Mr. Driver, an attorney, that he had advised a client to institute a criminal prosecution against Nundcoomar for forgery, and that his client had agreed to the advice. There was however an obstacle in their way. The original papers, without which the forgery could not be established, were lodged in the Mayor's Court, and though the Court were willing to grant copies, the original could not be obtained. "He told me," added Mr. Farrer, "that the Mayor's Court had not been so entirely free from influence as could be wished when proceeding against men of a certain description, such as Nundcoomar, but that, now that a more independent Court was come out, he should

advise his client (Mohun Pursaud) to authorise him (Driver) to instruct me to make the same motion before the Supreme Court of Judicature, to wit, for the original papers, that he had himself made before without effect before the Mayor's Court." Mr. Farrer accordingly moved the Court for the papers six weeks before Nundcoomar's accusation was produced at the Board by Mr. Francis, and was obliged to repeat his application twice before he obtained them. Soon after this, on the 6th May 1775, Nundcoomar was charged with forgery before Mr. Justice LeMaistre, who happened to be the sitting Magistrate, as at that time the Judges of the High Court were also the Justices of the Peace. "He requested the assistance of Mr. Justice Hyde who attended with him the whole day upon the examination which lasted from 9 in the morning till near 10 at night; when *no doubt of his guilt remaining in the heart of either of us* upon the evidence on the part of the Crown, a commitment in the usual form was made out." *

At a meeting of the Council on the 8th of March 1775 a letter was received from Nundcoomar in which, after recounting his past services, he stated—"My only intention in setting forth the services I have done, and the character I have

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 10th August 1775, Vol. II, page 409.

to an advanced age supported, is to introduce my request that I might not suffer upon such a charge, from the bare accusation, a punishment equal to that of death, the violation of the most sacred duties of my religion. The Hon'ble President, I am well assured, is fully assured of the facts I allude to; it may be requisite to explain to the rest of the Hon'ble Members of the Board that the institutions of our religion enjoin a number of ablutions, prayers and other ceremonies to be performed by the sect of Brahmins before they can take any kind of food. Nothing of this can be performed in the place where I am now; and could even these obstacles be surmounted, the place itself, as being inhabited by men of a different religion, would prevent my receiving any sustenance, without breaking those rules which I have hitherto religiously observed. I therefore humbly request that I may be permitted to reside, under as strict a guard as may be judged requisite, in some place where these objections may be obviated."*

Colonel Monson moved that the Sheriff and his Deputy be requested to attend the Board with the warrant of commitment for Nundcoomar's imprisonment. Hastings objected to the motion as an interference with the authority of the Judges of the Supreme Court.

* Secret Select Committee's Proc, 8th May 1775, Vol. II, page 366.

"MR. FRANCIS.—I beg leave to inform the Board that I understand that Raja Nundcoomar, since his commitment to the common jail in consequence of the opinion of Mr. Justice LeMaistre exceeding the terms of the warrant of commitment, has taken no sustenance whatsoever, and that he cannot do it in his present situation without losing caste, which to a man of his high rank and sect is deemed a punishment worse than death. I think the motion made by Colonel Monson perfectly regular and necessary. We cannot take the prayer of the Raja's petition into consideration until we are regularly informed by what authority he is committed to the common jail. If it should appear that the warrant does not express a commitment to the common jail, but that such commitment has arisen solely from the extra judicial opinion of Mr. Justice LeMaistre I then think it may be legally within the power of this Board to prevent the death of the Raja by relieving him from the vile confinement under which he has been placed in the same prison with all the felons of Calcutta, and securing him in some other manner under the safe custody of the Sheriff. This I conceive may be done without any infringement of the authority of the Supreme Court of Judicature. At all events my endeavour shall not be wanting, as far as I shall think myself warranted by law, to prevent a man of his high rank perishing in a common jail for want of sustenance which he cannot take without forfeiting a religious rank and purity, which I presume from all that I have heard of the religious customs and prejudices of the Brahmins, to which sect he belongs, may be dearer to him than his life; the Raja has now, I believe, been confined upwards of forty hours, exclusive of the time taken up in his examination."

"THE GOVERNOR GENERAL.—I beg leave to observe that

many things have been asserted which I presume Mr. Francis gives only from report. I have not heard myself that Nundcoomar is confined among common felons. I do not believe that by the principles of his religion his caste can be effected by any habitation that may be allotted him. This is a point of which the heads of the religion are only capable of judging. I understand by a note received this morning from Mr. Durham that the Judges are at this time assembled for the purpose of taking into consideration the plea of Nundcoomar in this particular, and that he was desired by them to apply to me for proper persons to give them information concerning the effects which his confinement might produce on his caste, or some points of the like nature, and I in consequence directed the Superintendent of the khalsa records to apply to such of the pundits as were in Calcutta and to desire them to give their attendance on the Judges."*

It was ordered that the Sheriff and his Deputy should be immediately summoned. On their attending and being asked for the original warrant for the commitment of Raja Nundcoomar for the inspection of the Board, they delivered it as follows:—

"To the Sheriff of the Town of Calcutta and Factory of Fort William in Bengal and to the Keeper of His Majesty's Prison at Calcutta.

"Receive into your custody the body of Maharaja Nundcoomar herewith sent you, charged before us, on the oaths of Mohun Persaud, Cammaul-ud-deen Khan, and others with feloniously uttering as true a false and counterfeit writing obligatory knowing the same to be false and counterfeit in

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 8th May 1775, Vol. II, page 366.

order to defraud the executors of Bollokee Dass, deceased, and him safely keep until he shall be discharged by due course of law.

"Given under our hands and seals this 6th day of May in the year of Our Lord 1775.

"S. C. LEMAISTRE.
"JOHN HYDE."*

Colonel Monson then asked the Sheriff upon what authority he committed Nundcoomar to prison, and he replied that he was not in town and did not execute the warrant. The Colonel then proceeded to question the Deputy Sheriff as follows :—

"*Q.*—Did you on this warrant commit Maharaja Nundcoomar to the jail of Calcutta?"

"*A.*—I did."

"*Q.*—Did you not subsequent to that warrant receive a note from Mr. Justice LeMaistre acquainting you that it was his opinion that Maharaja Nundcoomar should be committed to the common jail?"

"*A.*—On receiving the warrant from Mr. Justice LeMaistre and Mr. Justice Hyde, which has now been read, I was going to order it to be put into execution, but Mr. Jarrett, attorney for Nundcoomar, expressing a desire that he might be sent to some other place than the common jail, and delivering it as his opinion that he might as properly be confined in any other place, the Judges took it under consideration, and, in answer to Mr. Jarrett's request, told him that they were both

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 8th May 1775, Vol. II, page 367.

of opinion he could be nowhere properly confined but in the common jail, but that for his satisfaction they would ask the opinion of the Lord Chief Justice to whose house they were then going. In consequence of this I detained Raja Nundcoomar till I knew the Lord Chief Justice's opinion, and soon after received a note signed by Mr. Justice LeMaistre, which I beg leave to produce."

"Upon consultation with the Lord Chief Justice, we are all clearly of opinion that the Sheriff ought to confine his prisoner in the common gaol upon this occasion."

S. C. LEMAISTRE."*

Francis then asked the Sheriff whether "he knew what conveniences or accommodation Nundcoomar had in the jail," and the Sheriff replied—"He has a small room in which the Jailor used to sleep who removed his family on that account." The Deputy Sheriff added "that it was without the prison gate and had no communication with the other people in the jail."† A motion was then put by Francis and carried that "the Sheriff and his Deputy be directed to wait on the Chief Justice on the part of this Board and to represent to him the situation of the Raja Nundcoomar,

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 8th May 1775, Vol. II, page 368.

† "General Clavering to the Deputy Sheriff—

Q.—If it is without the gate, it is not in the prison.

A.—There are two gates to the prison. When I said it was detached from the place where felons and debtors were kept, I did not mean that it was not a part of the prison; the Jailor's house is always considered as a part of the jail and adjoins it."—*Secret Select Committee's Proc. 8th May 1775, Vol. II, page 370.*

whose religion, as he hath informed this Board, obliges him to deny himself sustenance in the particular circumstances of his present confinement, and to desire that the Chief Justice will consider of granting the prisoner such relief as may be consistent with the strict security of his person to answer to the charges brought against him."*

At the meeting of the Council next day, a letter was received from the Sheriff and Under-Sheriff, stating that, in obedience to the commands of the Board, they had waited on the Chief Justice, and laid the circumstances before him; and that he in answer had desired them to inform the Board "that Raja Nundcoomar was not committed by him, and that he has no authority to interfere in the affair, there being felony expressly charged in the warrant."† A letter was also received from the Chief Justice, intimating to the Board—that before he had received their message he "had been informed that Nundcoomar had on account of his religion refused to take sustenance, and that he had immediately sent his munshy to him to acquaint him that he had given strict orders to the keeper of the prison that his confinement should in every respect be made as easy as

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 8th May 1775, Vol. II, page 371.

† Ditto ditto 9th May 1775, Vol. II, page 373.

possible to him, and to know from him whence his scruples arose. The answer returned to me was—*that he could not eat nor drink in a room where Christians or Mussulmans had been.* I thought it not proper to refer his case to the Judges who committed him merely on his suggestion, and to ascertain the facts I sent for the pundits, who are the keepers of the consciences and oracles of the Gentoos." The pundits stated "that it is no easy matter to lose caste. A Brahmin must eat eight times of the meal of a Mussulman before he can lose his caste." The Pundits also informed the Chief Justice that they were "unanimously of opinion that if a straw shed was built in the inside of the prison-yard separate from any house, the Maharaja after a month's confinement would be obliged to pay R12 or thereabouts for the purpose of feasting the pundits and Brahmins." Impey pointed out that should the claim of Nundcoomar be allowed "it would be a very heavy burden to the Sheriff should he be obliged to provide separate houses for each Brahmin whom it might be necessary to confine, and much more so to provide a sufficient number of officers to surround these houses to prevent escapes. Many Brahmins are now in the common gaol. Men of higher caste than the Maharaja have been confined there. None of them have lost their caste, and this is the first complaint of the kind." The Chief Justice also sug-

gested that the Judges and not the Council were the proper persons to whom Nundcoomar ought to have applied. "I am happy in this instance that the Board has given me an opportunity of vindicating the Judges from any surmise of rigor or want of humanity; but must make it my request that the Maharaja may be acquainted by the Board that if he has any further application to make for relief that he must address himself immediately to the Judges, who will give all due attention to his representations, for, should he continue to address himself to the Board, that which will and can only be obtained from principles of justice may have the appearance of being obtained by the means of influence and authority, the peculiar turn of mind of the natives being to expect everything from power and little from justice. I know I shall be pardoned the observation, being clearly convinced that the Board would be as cautious in furnishing grounds for, as the Judges can be jealous of, incurring the imputation."*

The Board replied to Impey's letter as follows: "As the Government of the country is vested in us, we consider the natives of it as the immediate objects of our care and protection. Having received that petition from Maharaja Nundcoomar, of which we had the

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 9th May 1775, Vol. II, page 375.

honour to send you an extract, we thought ourselves bound, not only by our official duty, but by the obvious dictates of humanity, to communicate it as soon as possible to you. But in order to prevent that deception which you conceive we lay under, we examined the Sheriff and Deputy Sheriff with respect to the circumstances of the Raja's confinement, and afterwards put questions to the persons who act as President of the Caste Cutcherry in this city, by all which we are confirmed in thinking that the facts represented by Raja Nundcoomar were true, and that his refusal to take sustenance was founded on a sincere religious prejudice. We cannot refuse to receive any petitions presented to us, and if they relate to the administration of justice we conceive we are bound by our duty to communicate them to the Judges."* Impey answered that "he did not question the authority of the Board in receiving petitions, but that he carefully restricted what he said to the individual prisoner. I did not desire his petitions should not be received, but when received, if they were to require anything from the Judges of the Court, that the answer given to the petitions should be that he must apply himself directly to the Judge. This I did to avoid the imputation I there alluded to, which would be equally derogatory to the character of the Council as that of the Judges.

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 9th May 1775, Vol. II, page 377.

The particular reason which called upon me in this case to make that requisition was the reports publicly circulated in this town that, if the Judges could not be prevailed upon to release the Maharaja he would be delivered by force. These reports I knew to be groundless; but was apprehensive of the effects of their gaining credit, especially in the infant state of the court, before its authority is sufficiently understood or established. It is not sufficient that Courts of Justice act independently; it is necessary for the good government of a country that they should be believed and known to be above all influence."*

The Council answered that the reports mentioned by the Chief Justice were wholly untrue, and enclosed an affidavit in which they denied that they ever entertained an intention to release Nundcoomar by force. Hastings declined to sign the affidavit, deeming it was unnecessary, but declared his "entire conviction and assurance that no Member of the Board ever conceived an intention of using force for the release of Maharaja Nundcoomar from his imprisonment."†

On the 8th of June the trial of Nundcoomar began before the Chief Justice, Mr. Justice Chambers, Mr. Justice LeMaistre, Mr. Justice Hyde,

* Sir James FitzJames Stephen writes:—"I have not found the answer made by the Council to this letter."—*Story of Nundcoomar, page 99.*

† Secret Select Committee's Proc., 16th May 1775, Vol. II, page 378.

and a Jury consisting of the most respectable European inhabitants, some of whom had been long resident in the country and some born in it.* The prisoner had the privilege of challenging twenty on the panel, and exercised it in the cases of eighteen, reading their names out from a paper in his hand. Mr. Durham was counsel for the Crown, and Mr. Farrer, the ablest advocate at the bar, for the defence. After a trial which lasted continuously for seven days a verdict of guilty was returned. A week after the verdict, a motion in arrest of judgment was made by Farrer before the full bench, but refused, and sentence of death was passed. Farrer then got his junior to present to the Court a petition for leave to appeal, but this was also rejected, because it did not contain any specific reasons why an appeal should be allowed. The next step he took in his client's favour was to prepare a petition to the Judges for the signature of the Jury praying for a respite, but only one Juryman consented to sign it. Undaunted by want of success Farrer prepared another petition, which was addressed

* Macaulay states: "Nundcoomar was brought before *Sir Elijah Impey* and a jury composed of Englishmen." Macaulay could never have read the trial, or he would have known that Nundcoomar was tried before Sir Elijah Impey and three other Judges, which makes a very material difference in forming an estimate of the case. Mr. Elijah Impey pointed out this fact in the Memoirs of his father, but Macaulay had not the generosity to correct the error into which he was led by Mill. Merivale also makes no mention of Nundcoomar having been tried by four Judges.

by Nundcoomar to the Governor General in Council, and he suggested that the Council should endorse this petition to the Court. But General Clavering and Colonel Monson refused to entertain the idea, the General assigning as a reason that "it had no relation whatever to the public concerns of the country, which alone he was sent out to transact, and that he would not make any application in favour of a man who had been found guilty of forgery, nor indeed did he think it would do any good." The day before he forwarded his petition to the Governor General in Council Nundcoomar had sent a most piteous letter to Francis. He wrote: "All my hopes under God Almighty is in you, therefore most humbly entreat, in the name of God, you will be pleased to intercede for me and procure a respite till His Most Gracious Majesty's pleasure is known." He added: "As I entirely rely on your Worship's endeavour to do me all the good you can, I shall not, according to the opinion of the Hindoos, accuse you in the day of judgment of neglecting to assist me in the extremity I am now in." But Francis took no steps to save the life of his suppliant, and on the 5th August 1775 Nundcoomar was hanged *

* "But whilst he (Hastings) was exposing to publicity Nundcoomar's infamies and giving proof of most of them, or indeed of all, it came out that this man used to forge bills of exchange under the hands and seals of eminent men, and that, after having imitated their seals exactly, he kept them at home

At a meeting of the Council held on the 14th of August, General Clavering informed the Board "that on the 4th of the month a person calling himself a servant of Nundcoomar came to his house and sent an open paper to him. As I imagined that the paper might contain some request that I should take some steps to intercede for him, and being resolved not to make any application whatever in his favour, I left the paper on my table until the 6th, which was the day after his execution, when I ordered it to be translated by my interpreter. As it appears to me that this paper contains several circumstances which it may be proper for the Court of Directors and Her Majesty's Ministers

ready at all times for manufacturing, as occasion required, bills of exchange and bonds in any one's name and hand to be hereafter produced at his pleasure, by which iniquitous practice he used to keep everyone in awe of his displeasure; amongst these pieces of this manufactory he had forged an obligation bond in favour of Bolakee Dass, a banker, at all times of much credit, but who had acquired a great name in Mir Caffen-ghan's time: he had presented it to the Company's cash-keeper and had received the full amount, which he had kept to himself." * * * * * Nevertheless, the General's protection having proved of no avail against crimes that had been fully ascertained, Nundcoomar underwent his sentence in the manner stated, and on the seventeenth of Jemade of the year one thousand one hundred and eighty-nine he was drawn up and hanged by the neck. His money and effects were registered and then delivered to his son Raja Goordass. They say that the whole amounted to fifty-two lakhs of money, and full as much more in effects and other property in his possession. Amongst other strange things found in his house there came out a small casket containing the forged seals of a number of persons of distinction. In consequence of this discovery his malicious acts were dragged to open light, and they met with what they well deserved."—*Sair-ul-Mutakerin.*

to be acquainted with, I have brought it with me here, and desire that the Board will instruct me what I am to do with it."* It was resolved after some discussion that the paper delivered by the servant of Nundcoomar to General Clavering be produced and read.

At a meeting of the Council held on the 16th August "the Persian Translator sent in a correct translation of the document," and Hastings moved that as it "contained expressions reflecting on the character of the Chief Justice and Judges of the Supreme Court, a copy might be sent to them."

"MR. FRANCIS.—I think that our sending a copy of the Raja Nundcoomar's address to this Board to the Chief Justice and the Judges would be giving it much more weight than it deserves. I consider the insinuations contained in it against them as wholly unsupported and of a libellous nature, and, if I am not irregular, in this place I would move that orders should be given to the Sheriff to cause the original to be burnt publicly by the hands of the common hangman."

"MR. BARWELL.—I have no objections to the paper being burnt by the hands of the common hangman, but I would deliver it to the Judges agreeably to the Governor's proposition."

"COLONEL MONSON.—I differ with Mr. Barwell in opinion. I think this Board cannot communicate the letter to the Judges; if they did, I think they might be liable to a prosecution for a libel; the paper I deem to have a libellous tendency, and the assertions contained in it are unsupported. I agree with Mr. Francis in opinion that the paper should be

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 14th August 1775, Vol. II, page 412.

burnt under the inspection of the Sheriff by the hands of the common hangman."

"GENERAL CLAVERING.—I totally disapprove of sending to the Judges the paper, agreeably to the Governor General's proposition, because I think it might make the members of the Board who sent it liable to a prosecution, and therefore agree with Mr. Francis that it should be delivered to the Sheriff to be burnt by the hands of the common hangman."

"THE GOVERNOR GENERAL.—I should have no objection to any act which should publish to the world the sense which this Board entertain of the paper in question, but it does not appear to me that such an effect will be produced by Mr. Francis's motion. The inhabitants of this settlement form but a very small class of that collective body commonly understood by that expression of the word. The petition itself stands upon our records, through which it will find its way to the Court of Directors, to His Majesty's Ministers, and in all probability will become public to the whole people of Britain. I do not however object to the motion of its being burnt."

"The Board do not agree to the motion for sending a copy of the address of Maharaja Nundcoomar to the Judges, but resolve that orders be sent to the Sheriff, with the original letter, to cause it to be burnt publicly by the hands of the common hangman, in a proper place for that purpose, on Monday next, declaring it to be a libel."

"MR. FRANCIS.—I beg leave to observe that by the same channel through which the Court of Directors and His Majesty's Ministers or the nation might be informed of the contents of the paper in question, they must also be informed of the reception it had met with, and the sentence passed upon it by this Board. I therefore hope that its being de-

stroyed in the manner proposed will be sufficient to clear the characters of the Judges, so far as they appear to be attacked in that paper; and to prevent any possibility of the imputation indirectly thrown on the Judges from extending beyond this Board, I move that the entry of the address from Raja Nundcoomar entered on our proceedings of Monday last be expunged."*

The Judges addressed the following letter to the Board:—

To

The Hon'ble WARREN HASTINGS, *Governor General, and the Gentlemen of the Council.*

"HON'BLE SIR AND SIRS,—A paper containing a false, scandalous, and malicious charge against the Judges of the Supreme Court, produced at your Board, having been by you declared a libel, and ordered to be burned by the hands of the common hangman, we return you our thanks for having shown so due a sense of this outrage to public justice; but as we must be interested as well in the minutes introducing and condemning the paper, as in the paper itself, we find ourselves obliged to desire that you will furnish us with a copy of the libel, and of such minutes which relate to it, as stand on your Consultations, and must therefore be conveyed to England, that we may judge whether they contain any matters necessary for us to take notice of.

"Knowing the satisfaction His Majesty and his Ministers, as well as the Hon'ble East India Company, who were deeply interested in the due administration of justice, must

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 16th August 1775, Vol. II, page 413.

receive from the high reputation which the Supreme Court has acquired in this country, we thought we owed it to ourselves and the State to transmit to you the enclosed papers that they may stand recorded on your Consultations, which we think peculiarly proper at this time, as by promulgating the universal sense of this settlement in relation to our conduct, they are a direct and public refutation of the libel, and corroborate such of your minutes as tend to vindicate our reputations."*

"We are,
Hon'ble Sir and Sirs,
Your obedient humble Servants,
E. IMPEY.
ROBT. CHAMBERS.
S. C. LEMAISTRE.
JOHN. HYDE."

"*28th August 1775.*"

The papers which the Judges enclosed were no doubt the addresses presented to them approving of their conduct. The first was by the Grand Jury to Impey individually; the second, also addressed to Impey personally, was by the free merchants, free mariners and other inhabitants of the town of Calcutta,

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 4th September 1775, Vol. II, page 414.

and was signed by eighty-four Europeans.* A third address to all the Judges was signed by forty-three Armenians, and a fourth was signed by about a hundred leading natives of Calcutta and the neighbourhood.

Francis objected to the addresses being entered "because the libel to which the papers are said to contain a direct and public refutation has been expunged, the original burnt, and I do not believe a copy of it now exists.† His Majesty's Ministers and the

* Mr. Beveridge states eight were members of the Jury.

"These addresses jar on the sentiment which condemns the praise of persons in power during their actual tenure of it; but I am by no means sure that they do not represent the actual state of feeling, both European and Native in Calcutta at that time. That they represent European feeling there is no reason to doubt. The Europeans were quite independent of the Court, and not long afterwards bitterly attacked it. An address by natives is always open to suspicion, but the Council had at that time far greater influence over the natives than the Court, which indeed had none."—*Story of Nundcoomar, by Sir James FitzJames Stephen, Volume I, page 228.*

† Francis was mistaken. Impey produced it and read it in his defence. He said that Hastings "thought it no more than common justice to the Judges to give it to me, and as it was in the Secret Department of the Government he delivered it to me under an oath of secrecy not to disclose it in India except to the Judges. Except to them it has not been disclosed to this day when it is called forth by necessity for my defence."—*Story of Nundcoomar, by Sir James FitzJames Stephen, Volume II, page 95.*

A facsimile of the petition is printed in Impey's Memoirs, page 417. The petition states:—"For the fault of representing at this time a just fact which for the interest of the King and the relief of the people I in a small degree made known, many English gentlemen have become my enemies; and, having no other means to conceal their own actions, deeming my destruction of the utmost expediency for themselves, revived an old affair of Mohun Pursaud's which had formerly been repeatedly found to be false, and the Governor, knowing Mohun Pursaud to be a notorious liar, turned him out of his house, and themselves becoming his aiders and abettors, and Lord Impey and the other Justices have tried me by the English laws which are contrary to the

Hon'ble East India Company should be informed of the high reputation which the Supreme Court has acquired in this country." It was resolved by the majority "that the enclosures in the letter from the Supreme Court be not inserted on the records of the Board," and "that the Judges be not furnished with copies of the minutes upon the libel." A few months after Francis had borne evidence as to the high reputation which the Supreme Court had acquired in the country, and had moved that the petition of Nundcoomor be burnt on account of its being a libel on the Court, he began to make insinuations against the integrity of the Judges. In the Consultation of the 25th January will be found a minute signed by Clavering, Monson and Francis, but evidently written by the last, in which occur the following remarks:—

"After the death of Nundcoomar, the Governor, I believe, is well assured that no man who regards his own safety will venture to stand forth as his accuser. On a subject of this

customs of this country, in which there was never any such administration of justice before; and taking the evidence of my enemies in proof of my crime have condemned me to death. But by my death the King's justice will let the actions of no person remain concealed, and now that the hour of death approaches I shall not for the sake of this world be regardless of the next, but represent the truth to the gentlemen of the Council. The forgery of the bond, of which I am accused, never proceeded from me. Many principal people of this country, who were acquainted with my honesty, frequently requested of the Judges to suspend my execution till the King's pleasure should be known, but this they refused, and unjustly take away my life. For God's sake, gentlemen of the Council, you who are just, and whose words are truth, let me not undergo this injury, but wait the King's pleasure. If I am simply put to death I will with my family demand justice in the next life."

delicate nature it becomes us to leave every honest man to his reflections. It ought to be made known, however, to the English nation that the forgery of which the Raja was accused must have been committed several years ago; that in the interim he had been protected and employed by Mr. Hastings; that his son was appointed to one of the first offices in the Nabob's household with a salary of one lakh of rupees, and that the accusation which ended in his destruction was not produced until he came forward and brought a specific charge against the Governor of corruption in his office. If Mr. Hastings had been careful of his own honour, we think he would not have appeared himself as the prosecutor of his accuser, and that he would have exerted his influence with Mohun Persaud to suspend the other prosecution until he had proved the falsehood of the charges brought against himself by Nundcoomar. As things are now circumstanced the world may perhaps conclude that this man was too formidable a witness to be suffered to appear, and that any degree of odium or suspicions which the violent measures taken to destroy him might throw on the Governor's character, was not to be weighted against the danger of his proving the truth of his accusations.*"

Hastings, as his correspondence with the Court of Directors clearly proves, made use of the services of Nundcoomar because he was commanded to do so by the Court of Directors, and he employed his son for the same reason. His prosecution of Nundcoomar for conspiracy was an act of legitimate self-defence, and

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 25th January 1776, Vol. II, page 476.

it would have been an act of doubtful propriety for the Governor of a province to have used his influence to suspend the prosecution of a crimanal charge. It is extremely probable, as Francis stated, that if Nundcoomar "had never stood forth in politics his other offences would not have hurt him." If he had not attacked Mohun Persaud before the majority, who he believed were supreme in the state, Mohun Persaud might never have pressed the charge of forgery. But if the evidence of Farrer is trustworthy,* and it is the evidence of a hostile witness who was the advocate of Nundcoomar and a close friend of Francis, the criminal proceeding grew naturally out of the previous civil suit. There has never been produced a particle of evidence to connect Hastings with the forgery suit, but on the other hand we have his own solemn assertion that he had neither prompted nor encouraged it. He stated :—"I have declared on oath before the Supreme Court of Justice that I neither advised nor encouraged the prosecution of Maharāja Nundcoomar. It would have ill-become the first Magistrate in the Settlement to have employed his influence either to promote or dissuade it."† For the death of Nundcoomar Hastings

* Mr. Beveridge gives reasons for questioning Farrer's memory, but it seems highly improbable that an advocate who played so leading a part in so important a case should forget the circumstances connected with it.

† The motives of delicacy which Hastings averred he felt on the subject were wholly beyond the conception of Francis. To him it was only natural that Hastings should use his influence against Nundcoomar, because Francis

can in no way be held accountable, but Francis and his colleagues, who possessed supreme power, might have saved his life by asking the Supreme Court to grant his prayer that the execution of the sentence should be suspended pending a reference to England.* Not on Hastings but on the triumvirate must rest the responsibility of the death of the culprit Nundcoomar.

argued that the more he disliked Hastings the wider his grounds of quarrel with him were, the more natural was it that he should be his assailant: and the reason for the House of Commons excluding him by their vote from a place among the managers surpassed the powers of comprehension.—*Statesmen of the time of George III, by Lord Brougham, page 89.*

* "Francis gave as an excuse for not applying to the Court the complaint made by the Court that it was unconstitutional to address a Court of Justice on matters judicially before it by letter, and not by petition or motion in open Court. He must either have overlooked or wilfully refused to notice the broad distinction between writing a letter to the Court on a matter judicially before them, and writing on a matter in which they had to exercise an executive discretion. The latter is as natural and proper as the former is unconstitutional. The Home Secretary in England constantly corresponds with individual Judges as to applications for pardons. He would never dream of writing to a Judge as to the exercise of his judicial duties. Any such application would have to be made by Counsel in Court."—*The Story of Nundcoomar, by Sir FitzJames Stephen, Volume I, page 236.*

CHAPTER IV.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS—DUEL WITH FRANCIS.

Shortly after Nundcoomar had been committed for trial, a despatch arrived from the Bombay Government announcing that they had made a treaty with Raghoba, the claimant to the throne of the Peshwa, by which he agreed to cede Salsette and Bassein to the English in consideration of being himself restored to Poona. Hastings pronounced the treaty unseasonable, impolitic, unjust, and unauthorised. "It is unseasonable because the treaty was formed with Raghoba at a time in which he appears to have been totally abandoned by his former adherents. It was impolitic because it threw the whole burthen of the war on the Company without a force at the command of the Presidency equal to the undertaking, without money or certain resources, and because it was undertaken without any regard to the general interest of the other settlements of the Company in India. It was unjust because they had received no injury from any part of the Mahratta State which could authorise their interfering in their mutual dissensions, nor were under any actual ties to assist Raghoba." * Though Hastings condemned the treaty, he took a statesman's view of the position, and felt that to withdraw abruptly after having entered into positive engagements with

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 31st May 1775, Vol. II, page 391.

one party and offended the other perhaps beyond hopes of reconciliation, might be attended with greater danger than prosecuting the original design and even with national dishonour. He therefore proposed that—"The President and Council of Bombay be peremptorily enjoined to cancel the treaty with Raghoba, and to withdraw the detachment immediately to their own possessions by whatever means may be in their power, unless any of the following cases may have occurred":—

"*1st*—That they shall have obtained any decisive advantage over the enemy;"

"*2nd*—That the detachment shall have proceeded to such a distance, or be in such a situation, as to make it dangerous either to retreat or go on;"

"*3rd*—That a negotiation shall have taken place between Raghoba and his opponents in consequence of the support afforded by this alliance." *

Francis entirely agreed "with the Governor General in disapproving of the conduct of the Government of Bombay, and in protesting against all the consequences which may attend it;" * but he added: "I think that their engaging the Company's troops on distant inland expeditions, especially without any determinate object for their operations, or limitation of time for their services, ought not to receive the least

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 31st May 1775, Vol. II page 392.

countenance or authority from us; and that we ought to insist upon their recalling the troops without any consideration but that of their safe retreat." *

It was agreed by the majority that "the troops be ordered to be recalled without any exception but the single consideration of their safety." *

The Bombay Government obeyed the commands of the Supreme Government and ordered the forces who had won the hard-fought battle of Arras into British territory, but the President wrote a dignified protest against their action. He declared that he and his colleagues considered the welfare of the Presidency entirely depended on their preventing the Island of Salsette from again falling into the hands of the Portuguese, and "in this situation we are of opinion policy absolutely required that we should side with one of the contending parties in the Mahratta State, that it might be reconciled to our motives for that attack, and to our continuing in possession of that island. This necessity being allowed, justice doubtless required that we should take part with Raghoba, the Peshwa, and in duty to our employers we made this decision as advantageous to them as possible, as we think is evident from the treaty." † They proceeded to inform the Governor General that they had de-

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 31st May 1775, Vol. II, page 392.

† Selections from the State Papers preserved in the Bombay Secretariat (Mahratta Series).

puted Mr. William Taylor, "a member of our Board, to visit Calcutta in order, more fully than can be done by letter at so great a distance, to represent to your Honor and Council the motives for all our proceedings, the present situation of affairs, with the danger and discredit that must attend our treaty being cancelled, and Raghoba deserted?" Mr. Taylor on reaching Calcutta wrote a very full and able letter reviewing Mahratta affairs, but his arguments had no effect on the Supreme Government. They informed him that "after duly considering the representations which you have been pleased to deliver to us, we are confirmed in our opinion of the expediency of the Company's troops being immediately recalled from the service of Raghoba to their own garrison?" They also declared their intention of deputing an agent of their own, Colonel Upton, to negotiate with the ruling ministerial party at Poona. At first the pretensions of the Ministry at Poona were so great that it was impossible to make any settlement with them, and on the 7th March the Supreme Government, thinking that Colonel Upton's negotiations had been entirely broken off, wrote to the Bombay Government to renew hostilities. They said—"We think it necessary to take the earliest opportunity to release you from the restrictions which we formerly laid upon your operations, and to provide every means in our power for carrying on the war in conjunction with Raghoba with vigour." The

treaty of Purandhar however, to the disappointment of the Governor General and the Bombay Government, had been signed before the letter was written. "The treaty of Purandhar," writes Warren Hastings to a friend, "was executed on the 1st March 1776. I disapproved of it?"

The treaty established peace between the British Government and the ministerial party, and dissolved the alliance with Raghoba. It proved, however, only a temporary and hollow truce. The Bombay Government continued to give protection to Raghoba, and the Mahrattas delayed and evaded the concessions they had made. It was impossible that any treaty which left Salsette in the hands of the English would meet with the approval of the patriot party in the capital of the Deccan. Two years passed in appeals from the Bombay and Poona authorities to the Governor General in Council, and in ineffectual though earnest endeavours on their part to reconcile them. Then a new feature was added to the dispute by the arrival of the Chevalier de St. Lubin at Poona. Nana Fadnavis, the great Mahratta statesman who had strenuously obstructed the fulfilment of the treaty, immediately attached himself to the Chevalier. The British Envoy complained that "indeed in every respect they paid the greatest attention to the French?" And M. de St. Lubin was received with great pomp by

the Peshwa when he delivered his credentials, "being letters from the King and Ministers of France." The main object of the Chevalier was to establish a factory, supported by a military force, at Poona, and to obtain a seaport near Bombay.* If he had succeeded the French would have regained their former importance in India, and the English would have had to battle with them, supported by all the powers and resources of the Mahratta Empire, for supremacy in the East. The Bombay Government rightly remarked "if time is given to the French for the French Ministry to take their measure, and to supply Nana with a body of forces, we can expect nothing but a repetition of the scene of wars and intrigues formerly acted on the coast of Coromandel, which will certainly be fatal to the influence of the English on this coast, and may end in our total subversion." At this critical time the rivalry between Sakaram Bapu, the aged premier, and his younger associate Nana Fadnavis created a division in the Poona Cabinet, and the former made overtures for the assistance of the Company to restore Raghoba to Poona. The Bombay Government resolved "that if a formal application were made it might certainly with the utmost justice be considered as an

* The letters from J. Madgell and Mr. Farmer of the Bombay Civil Service, published in the Selections from the Bombay State Papers (Mahratta Series), pages 291 and 296, reveal in detail the exploits of M. St. Lubin.

application from the Mahratta State and treated accordingly: as Sakaram Bapu is the Divan, or first officer of the Government, and the principal person with whom Colonel Upton concluded the late treaty on behalf of the State he being the Minister first named in the treaty." It was also ordered that "the resolution be immediately forwarded to the Governor General and Council, who, we flatter ourselves, will do justice to our motives, and afford their approbation and support to the step we have taken, and to the measures we may further pursue." The approbation and support of the Supreme Government were, after a stormy debate, gained only by the casting vote of Hastings, who owing to the death of General Clavering had recovered his ascendancy in Council. Francis and Wheler condemned the resolution as illegal, unjust, and impolitic. They argued that it was illegal because it was taken without the sanction of the supreme authority; unjust because it was contrary to the Treaty of Purandhar; and impolitic because it involved the English in the dangers and burdens of war. Hastings and Barwell argued that the emergency justified the illegality; that it was not contrary to the treaty because the principal person with whom the treaty had been made had proposed it; and that it was not impolitic because it would give the English permanent influence in the Mahratta Empire. After considerable

discussion, and after minutes of considerable ability and force had been dictated and read at the Council Board both by Francis and Hastings, the following main resolutions were adopted: that the President and Council of Bombay are warranted by the Treaty of Purandhar to join in a plan for conducting Raghunath-rao to Poona on the application of the ruling part of the administration of the Mahratta State; that a supply of money, to the amount of ten lakhs of rupees, be immediately granted to the President and Council of Bombay; that military assistance be sent to the Presidency. A force under Colonel Leslie was ordered to cross the Continent, and place itself under the orders of the Government of Bombay.

On the 8th June a letter reached the Board from Colonel Leslie informing them that he had met with some slight opposition from the Mahrattas, and Francis took advantage of the occurrence to propose, with the pertinacity which distinguished him, that "the expedition be absolutely countermanded, and Colonel Leslie's command of course dissolved as soon as he has quartered his troops on this side the Jumna in the best manner the season will permit."* Before the proposition could be discussed news of a very grave nature reached the Board. The Bombay Government wrote to them—"It is with much concern we

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 11th June 1778, Vol. II, page 623.

acquaint you that, by the *London Gazette* of the 16th December just received from Bassora, we learn that General Burgoyne with his whole army, consisting of 3,500 fighting men, was compelled to surrender to General Gates on the 14th of October on condition of being transported to England from Boston, and not to serve again in America during the war. General Howe remains in possession of Philadelphia, with which place the fleet have in vain endeavoured to open a communication, and three of our ships have been destroyed in the attempts, *viz.*, the *Augusta*, of 64 guns, the *Roebuck*, of 44, and the *Merton* of 16. General Washington was encamped within a few miles from Philadelphia, and the Congress had removed to Lancaster. General Clinton with a small army had proceeded up the river of New York and had met with some success."* Francis requested his colleagues to consider "whether the unfortunate event in America ought not to have a general influence upon our measures here, whether this be a season for hazarding offensive operations of any kind, and whether policy and prudence do not plainly dictate to us that, while the nation is so deeply engaged and pressed on one side, with everything to apprehend from the designs of France and Spain on

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 22nd June 1778, Vol. II, page 630.

the other, we should stand on our defence, and not weaken or divide the force on which the safety of Bengal may depend."* Hastings replied with the force and dignity which he could command when occasion required—"I hope that our affairs in America are not in the desperate situation in which they are described to be; but I see no connection between them and the concerns of this Government, much less can I agree that with such superior advantages as we possess over every power which can oppose us, we should act merely on the defensive and abruptly stop the operation of a measure of such importance to the national interests and to the national safety as that in which we have now decidedly engaged, with the eyes of all India turned upon it. On the contrary, if it be really true that the British arms and influence have suffered so severe a check in the Western world, it is the more incumbent on those who are charged with the interest of Great Britain in the East to exert themselves for the retrieval of the national loss."*

On the 7th of July 1778 the Government "received intelligence, by way of Suez, that war was declared by the Court of France against England on the 30th of March last."† A Council was immediately held, and Hastings, after bringing

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 22nd June 1778, Vol. II, page 632.
† Ditto Ditto 7th July 1778, Vol. II, page 637.

forward various measures concerning the defence of the city and province, proposed that—"Raja Chayt Singh be required in form to contribute his share of the burthen of the present war by consenting to the establishment of three regular battalions of sepoys, to be raised and maintained at his expense."* Francis acquiesced in the proposal, but suggested that Chayt Singh "should be informed that this additional charge will not be imposed upon him beyond the continuance of the present war."* Hastings remarked that "the qualification proposed was consonant to my intention on the question and implied in it;" but he could not agree to have any specific words added to the proposition as the matter involved a grave principle. "I agreed," he stated, "to add to the question the following words—'and to be disbanded at the end of the war;' but perceiving that the difference in our opinions upon this subject arises not from a disagreement respecting the requisition simply considered by itself, but from a different understanding of the right of the Company to exact, under any pressure of affairs, more than the sum stipulated by the sunnud granted to Chayt Sing and the kubbooliat given by him in return; I must therefore adhere to the question as it stands, wishing to avoid the question of right. If however we cannot agree

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 9th July 1778, Vol. II, page 638.

upon this point, still, I would wish to have the requisition made in the words of the question, and leave the decision of future right to our superiors."* At the close of the debate Hastings again reiterated his opinion as to the right of the paramount power to make the demand. His words were—"I agree to the question in the original terms of it, deeming it a right inherent in every Government to impose such assessment as it judges expedient for the common service and protection of all its subjects; and we are not precluded from it by any agreement subsisting between the Raja and this Government."† It was "resolved that the Raja Chayt Sing be required in form to contribute his share of the burthen of the present war, by the establishment of three regular battalions of sepoys to be raised and maintained at his expense, and the Governor General is requested to write to him to that effect."†

Though no formal intimation of the war with the French had reached Bengal, Hastings determined, by a decisive stroke, to take possession of the French settlements in India. A force was immediately despatched to demand the surrender of Chandernagore, and on the 10th of July Colonel

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 9th July 1778, Vol. II, page 638.
† Ditto Ditto 9th July 1778, Vol. II, page 639.

Dow wrote to the Board:—"In obedience to your demands, I took possession of the French factory at Chandernagore this morning at 10 o'clock. As I found various pretensions of delay were made, not admissible by the tenor of my orders, I was under the necessity of ordering the Company's troops to advance within the barrier where a guard of sepoys was posted under the command of a French officer. On this occasion the enemy's guards of the barrier having fired by order of their officer, without effect, a platoon was returned which killed four sepoys and wounded three or more. This accident was unavoidable. The guard dispersed and the troops entered the town of Chandernagore, where everything was afterwards conducted with the greatest regularity."* A letter was also received from Monsieur Hocquart, late Commandant of Chandernagore, demanding that the Board should accept certain specific articles of capitulation proposed by him, and expressing a hope that the inhabitants would be well treated. He also desired to be acquainted "with the reasons for the violence and force which you have used towards the French nation in whose name I speak to you."† To his letter the Board sent the following reply: "The instructions which we have given to Lieutenant-Colonel

* Secret Select Committee's Proc, 11th July 1778, Vol. II, page 642.
† Ditto Ditto 11th July 1778, Vol. II, page 646.

Dow being grounded on certain information that a war was declared by the Court of Great Britain against France on the 18th of last March, and by that of France against England on the 30th of the same month, we cannot depart from them. We beg leave, however, to acquaint you that it forms a part of our orders to Colonel Dow to treat the inhabitants of Chandernagore with all possible lenity and tenderness. We have no doubt he will attend to this injunction as far as may be consistent with their present situation and the usages of war in such cases."* The French Commander in reply reminded the Council that they "make no manner of answer to the ten articles in my letter," and added—"I do not think that requiring of the inhabitants the keys of their godowns and warehouses where he himself goes to take inventories (a commission beneath the rank he holds) is a mark of mildness and attention."* The Governor General replied—"We did not think it necessary to answer specifically to the different articles which you had proposed to our consideration, because the circumstances under which the town of Chandernagore was surrendered did not appear to be those of a capitulation."†

The merchants of Chandernagore also addressed

* Secret Select Committee's Proc. 11th July 1778, Vol. II, page 647.
† Ditto Ditto 11th July 1778, Vol. II, page 648.

an indignant remonstrance to the English Commandant. They put forward an ingenious and plausible argument that they should be unmolested because "the English settled in France have peaceably exerted their industry in times of war, and the same indulgence has been granted to the French settled in England." "We think, Sir," they wrote, "this latter situation with some exceptions to be nearly that which we have in Bengal. We have no other circulations than the moneys which your Government coin; we know no laws but those which you impose on us. Our Government, faithful to its treaties, has only established an administration at Chandernagore to give some sanction to our existence and to judge our differences according to our civil laws. If we had not thought, Sir, that such was our existence in Bengal, and if our interests, blended with those of the English, had not strengthened us in this opinion, we should never have abandoned ourselves to your discretion, in exercising our industry in a country at 60 leagues distance from the sea, and surrounded on all sides by your troops in which, making sacrifice of our properties, we have not even the hope of sheltering our liberty."* The English Commandant with graceful flattery was regarded as one "well acquainted with everything appertaining to history," and he was reminded of the generous

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 14th July 1778, Vol. II, page 651.

treatment that an English ship of war received from the Governor of Havannah. "The history which relates this fact makes no mention of the Governor's having been blamed by his Court, and all Europe admired the like conduct. So much is the law of nations superior to that of war."*

Colonel Dow forwarded the letter from the merchants to the Supreme Council, and they directed that all reasonable indulgence should "be shown to them in the full and free possession of their houses."†

A despatch was sent to Madras announcing the war with the French, and desiring that immediate steps should be taken for the capture of Pondicherry and of Mahé. It must have reached its destination with unusual expedition, for according to a letter dated the 8th of August "the troops that had been encamped near Conjeveram, consisting of two battalions of Europeans, three companies of artillery, and six battalions of sepoys with sixteen 6-pounders, encamped on the Red Hills, within 4 miles of Pondicherry, and were intended to prevent any succour being thrown into the fort."‡ More troops, battering cannon, and all sort of stores had however to be brought from Madras, Vellore,

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 14th July 1778, Vol. II, page 652.
† Ditto Ditto 14th July 1778, Vol. II, page 653.
‡ Ditto Ditto 30th November 1778, Vol. II, page 668.

Tanjore, and Trichinopoly, and many days elapsed before anything could be done. "On the 31st August some cannon and stores being arrived, and the fort and its environs having been examined, it was resolved to carry on two attacks. The one to the northward against the north-west bastion, the other to the southward against the bastion called Dauphin; a battery was begun to be erected this night on the south-west to infilade their works, to contain four 24-pounders and some mortars. The enemy fired continually on this work, but on the 4th September the battery was completed." On the 6th September the besiegers "broke ground to the northward and in the night drew a parallel within six hundred yards of the town. * * * * On the morning of the 18th September all the batteries opened. The fire from the fort was very heavy on all sides, but towards the evening our batteries had apparently the advantage and the enemy's fire decreased greatly." The approaches both on the north and south side were carried forward with unremitting vigour, but the vigilance and fire of the enemy, and the violent rains retarded the progress of the operations. "On the 14th October the bridge-of-boats that was intended to be used for the passage of the ditch on the south attack being completed, and a float being prepared for the same purpose to the northward, it was intended to assault the place about 8 o'clock in

the morning on the 15th. But about 11 in the forenoon the water forced itself into the gallery with such violence that it broke down and damaged some of the boats. * * * * * Though the assault could not take place yet an attack was made on the ravelin to the northward about 2 o'clock in the morning; the ravelin was surprised, and the enemy's party of twenty-two Europeans were mostly killed, wounded, or taken prisoners. Some sepoys escaped, as did some Europeans. We spiked four cannon and four mortars, destroyed a good many arms, and a quantity of ammunition. The 16th the gallery was repaired, and it was resolved to assault the place next morning, and the necessary orders were to have been given to the troops in the evening, but about 11 in the forenoon Monsieur De Vellite, Aide-de-Camp to Major-General Bellecombe, came with a flag of truce from the fort."* The besiegers by the generosity of their terms bore witness to the gallantry of the besieged. The garrison were allowed to march out with all the honours of war; and at the request of General Bellecombe the regiment of Pondicherry was allowed to retain its colours. After a lapse of some months the fortifications were destroyed. The French now retained in India nothing but Mahé, and on the 13th May 1779 the Governor General received a letter from Fort St. George an-

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 30th Nov. 1778, Vol. II, page 662.

nouncing the surrender of that place. The Madras Government also enclosed a letter from Hyder Ali strongly protesting against an attack on a French factory situated in his dominions. He had a month previously written direct to the Governor General as follows:—"I see what you write concerning your intentions against the French factory of Mahé. In my country there are factories belonging to the English, Dutch, Portuguese, Danes, and French and besides them there are many merchants here who are considered as my subjects; if any one entertains designs against those traders I will without doubt take the best and most considerate method to give them assistance. If you are not already acquainted with this, you may inform yourselves of those who have been long members of your Council."*

The growing hostility of Hyder threw a new and formidable difficulty in the way of Hastings: and the faction within the Council, as well as the exhaustion of the treasury, added bitterness to the miserable result of the war. The attempt to push into the heart of the Mahratta dominion with a small army had ended in disaster and disgrace. But the hour of danger is the opportunity of heroes. General Goddard, a soldier of courage and capacity, on hearing of the defeat of the Bombay troops, marched his detachment from

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 23rd March 1779, Vol. II, page 668.

Bundlecund to Surat, a distance of three hundred miles in twenty days, and by his timely arrival saved the Bombay Presidency from the grave danger which threatened it and restored the reputation of the British arms.* The Supreme Government, on hearing the news of the disgraceful Convention of Wargaum, which sacrificed all the acquisitions obtained since the first war and gave hostages to a victorious enemy, immediately disavowed it and directed General Goddard to open a fresh negotiation with the Ministers of the Mahratta State on the basis of the Treaty of Purandhar, provided they would recede from the pretensions which they had acquired by the late Convention and would agree not to admit any French force to their dominions, nor allow that nation to form any establishment on the Mahratta Coast.† The Mahrattas would not make peace on these terms, and on the 1st of January 1780 the war was renewed.

To divide the Mahratta strength and divert it from General Goddard, Hastings determined to despatch a small force to protect the territory of the

* "What reward will our superiors bestow on the man who has been the happy instrument of retrieving the recent dishonor which has tarnished the English name? Let me receive my customary portion of censure for having projected the expedition; I expect it. But his conduct in the execution of it, which has no relation to the principles of its formation, must surely entitle him to universal applause."—*Letter to Lawrence Sullivan, 18th April 1779; Memoirs of Warren Hastings, by Gleig, Volume II, page 273.*

† Selections from the Bombay State Papers (Mahratta Series), page 386.

Raja of Gohud lying on the Jumna, sixty miles south-east of Agra, from the encroachments of Sindia. The detachment under the command of Major Popham advanced in February, and after expelling the Mahrattas from Gohud assaulted and captured the fortress of Lahar. It was however felt that the force was too small to materially divert the Mahratta strength, and it was therefore proposed that a larger force under Major Camac should be sent to invade Mahdajee Sindia's country and to attack his capital. This proposition was vigorously opposed by Francis and Wheler in a minute dated 19th June 1780. They opposed it on the ground of expense, the time chosen, and because they considered that "a peace was indispensably necessary to save the India Company, and every interest connected with theirs, from the greatest distress if not certain ruin."* Hastings replied that "the rainy season is no impediment to our troops, but a great one to the Mahrattas, which consisted only of cavalry." "The objection made to the expense," he admitted, "is a material one, but a vigorous assertion," he remarked, "cannot be made without expense, nor can the war either be concluded honourably or prosecuted successfully without such an exertion. Feeble measures and advances for peace

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 19th June 1780, Vol. II., page 693.

will but add to the strength and presumption of our adversaries, discourage our friends, and perhaps induce them to become parties against us. The resources of this Government, exhausted as they are, and withheld from it by its internal imbecility, are yet equal to every probable contingency of the present war, if it is conducted on a consistent plan, and that not barred by desultory votes of Council on every measure for its prosecution."* As the main arguments of his opponents were drawn from the low state of the treasury and the inability of the Government to support the expense of the expedition, Hastings, after pointing out that the pay and batta of the troops would be the same whether they remained in their original quarters, or marched to the capital of Sindia, stated—"The contingencies of the detachment are therefore the only expense that can be reasonably charged to the expedition. These I rate far below two lakhs of rupees. That sum I offer to contribute to this disbursement. I have already deposited it within a small amount in the hands of the Sub-Treasurer, and I beg that the Board will permit it to be accepted for that service."† Hastings communicated the fact of having advanced this money to his friend Sullivan in a letter dated 30th August

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 26th June 1780, Vol. II, page 700.
† Ditto ditto, 26th June 1780, Vol. II, page 701.

1780. He wrote—"Do not be surprised, nor misinterpret my intention. I had no secret view of catching the public applause by an ostentatious display of supererogatory virtue, and the temporary sacrifice of my own fortune in the hopes of future repayment; the money was not my own; it was a peace offering from the Raja of Benares, which he had deputed his most confidential servant to Calcutta to make to me, and to solicit my pardon for all his past offences. I gave the man assurances of my forgiveness, but refused to accept the money, and he was on the point of returning when these debates in our Council began. It occurred to me to convert it to a public use; I gave him an opportunity of repeating the offer, and accepted it, directing it to be delivered to Mr. Croftes, our Sub-Treasurer, and him to receive it as a deposit in my name. It has since been re-coined, and turns out about two lakhs of sicca rupees. I believe I shall communicate this fact to the Court of Directors; but if I do not, I give you permission to make what use of the above relation of it you think proper, declaring upon my honour that I never will reclaim the money, and that I disclaim any title to it as I should not have taken it, but for and on the occasion which induced me to receive it, or one similar to it." Hastings did communicate the fact to the Court of Directors. In a letter to them, dated 29th of November 1780, he wrote—

"The money was not my own, and I neither could, nor would have received it, but for your benefit."

The acceptance of this present was one of the charges of bribery brought against Hastings, but after the various and frank avowals which he made of having received it, it is impossible to believe that he could have had an idea of converting it to his own use. He ordered it to be deposited in his name because he was averse to his opponents in Council having any power over its disbursement, and for the same reason he worded his offer in such a manner as to lead them to suppose that he meant to give it from his own fortune. The perpetual dissensions in Council and the almost unremitted opposition made to the measures proposed by Hastings induced him to do many unconstitutional acts which he would not have done had he been free and unshackled. If he received sums of money without the consent of his colleagues, it must be borne in mind that he also expended sums of money without their participation or consent. He paid without their knowledge three lakhs of rupees for the uninterrupted passage of our army to the coast. Hastings had also often to spend sums of money on secret service which he had every reason to believe the majority would oppose. When Francis left India and the opposition ceased, the sums of money which Hastings received were carried to the public accounts without delay, and without any circuitous proceeding.

Francis and Wheler persisted in their opposition to Hastings' proposals regarding the conduct of the war, and Francis wrote an able and comprehensive minute, in which he attacked vigorously the whole war policy of Hastings. "The Governor General," he writes, "talks of friends who may be discouraged, and who perhaps may be induced to become parties against us. We wish that the names of those friends had been mentioned. We do not know that this Government has a single friend or ally in India in the true sense of friendship and alliance, which supposes the power of giving assistance and a disposition to give it."* Francis did not deny that feeble measures and advances for peace may give strength and presumption to their adversaries, but he added—"We never meant to propose feeble measures, which necessarily defeat themselves: nor yet do we approve of vigorous measures, in the sense in which vigour has been hitherto understood, because we are convinced that this Government is unable to support them, and that if they could be supported a short time longer they would not bring us nearer to our object. Before the commencement of the war we foresaw and foretold the principal consequences that would attend it. We now judge of it by its effects, which we hope will

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 13th July 1780, Vol. II, page 706.

be considered, though every other sort of argument should continue to be disregarded."*

The tone of the minute and the taunt of failure could not fail to rouse the wrath of Hastings. His anger was increased by the belief that Francis was guilty of a gross breach of faith. At a meeting of the Council held on the 25th January 1779 Hastings had delivered a minute in which he discussed the intimation given by Mr. Barwell of his intention to return to England. He stated it would be fatal to the success of the Mahratta war if it were known at Poona and Nagpur that the powers of the Government were "on the eve of devolving to two Members, who have invariably opposed in every stage of its progress the plan which has been publicly adopted for the support of the Company's interest on the western side of India, and who, it is universally believed, will seize the first means which are offered to them to defeat and annul it altogether." He added—"A Member of this Government entrusted with the guardianship of the Company's interests, and of the honour of the British name in India, has not scrupled to propose that we should make an abject submission to the honourable possessors of the feeble Government of Poona, acknowledging our past

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 13th July 1780, Vol. II, page 708.

faults with a promise of amendment, and humbly entreating their permission for the safe retreat of our army from Berar to its confines," and he supported this statement by quoting some remarks made by Francis in a recent minute. Hastings then in the most emphatic manner implored Barwell not to carry out his intention of proceeding to England. "I do therefore conjure Mr. Barwell, both by that zeal which he has hitherto so steadily manifested for the interests of our common masters, and even by the ties of a friendship cemented by a participation of the same labour and sufferings for the public service, that he will not permit the measures in which he has a common and equal responsibility with myself to be exposed to the triumph of a party, but that he will both continue to afford the support of his presence and abilities to the present Government while it yet exists, and that he will suffer me to exact from him a declaration to that purpose, not only for my own satisfaction but for that of every man who has the Company's interests or the prosperity of this settlement, or the credit of his country at heart, and who, I presume to say, expects this sacrifice from him."* Barwell responded to the appeal of Hastings and declared that "the reasons that are assigned for it by the Governor

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 25th January 1779, Vol. II, pages 633-634.

General require me absolutely to retract the intention. I have declared I admit the force of them, and with pleasure declare my determination to support his Government as long as the public measures of it shall require."* Francis remarked that he and the Governor General differed greatly in their respective ideas of national honour. "I have no idea of national honour independent of justice. The projects of ambition are usually dangerous. If they are nothing but the projects of ambition, they are, in my judgment, always dishonourable. To revert to that pacific system which the Company have uniformly prescribed to us, to endeavour to conciliate the friendship, which we have unjustly or unwisely departed from, and to return, if it be possible, to the terms of a treaty which we ourselves have wantonly violated, are not acts, that will ever, as I think and as I feel, bring dishonour on the British name. I am sure they are the best means of preserving our strength and our real influence in India, and I have no doubt that they will meet with the highest approbation from home. As long as I am trusted with any share in the office of guardian of the British interests and honour in this country, these shall be the principles on which I will invariably act."†

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 25th January 1779, Vol. II, pages 665-666.

† Ditto ditto, 25th January 1779, Vol. II, page 637.

Five days after this acrimonious discussion had taken place in Council it is somewhat surprising to find Hastings writing to his friend Sullivan as follows:—"I have assented to an accommodation with Mr. Francis, the essential points of which are agreed on." In a letter dated the 4th March he again informed his friend of a reconciliation having taken place between himself and Francis, and quotes the conditions of the agreement. The first he gives in the following words:—"Mr. Francis will not oppose any measures which the Governor General shall recommend for the prosecution of the war in which we are supposed to be engaged with the Mahrattas, or for the general support of the present political system of this Government. Neither will he himself either propose or vote with any other member who shall propose any measure which shall be contrary to the Governor General's opinion in these points."* He proceeds to inform Sullivan that "Mr. Barwell, who was privy to the treaty in all stages of it, had determined to return to England in consequence with my free consent." He then speaks in the following handsome terms of the man who had been for the past five years his bitter foe, and had thwarted him in every political action: "In this instance I have

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 20th July 1780, Vol. II, page 712; see also Memoirs of Warren Hastings, by Gleig, Volume II, page 251.

proved the sincerity with which I have acted, and my reliance on Mr. Francis's faith and honour, and I must add in testimony of both, and in justification of my own discretion, that he has behaved so openly and with so little of the reserve and caution of a man actuated by indirect views that I am certain and venture to promise you that I shall suffer no loss of power or influence by Mr. Barwell's departure, though I shall miss and greatly regret the want of that aid which I might have derived from his friendship, his judgment, and his official resources had he stayed, and that I shall find Mr. Francis both true to his engagements and ready and willing to give me his support and assistance to the period destined for our acting together as joint members of this Administration; I am not the least fearful of the reverse."

What had lowered the pride of Hastings into an accommodation with Francis was the need of a united Government to meet the foreign and internal dangers which threatened the very existence of our dominion. The speedy and successful termination of the Mahratta war he considered essential to our safety, and it could only be conducted to a prosperous termination by vigorous and united action. To be free to act vigorously he condescended to make terms with his bitter foe, and he believed that Francis would

be true to his engagement. But in a very short time he discovered the perfidiousness of his adversary. No sooner had the departure of Barwell again given power to Francis than concessions were demanded with arrogance and were granted. As long as they did not involve questions of foreign policy Hastings conquered his pride. Then Francis was rash enough to renew his tactics of obstruction with regard to the conduct of the war, and Hastings in firm but moderate language suggested that his action involved a breach of faith. He wrote—"If Mr. Francis (I am compelled to speak thus plainly) thinks that he can better and more effectually conduct the war, to the termination which we both profess to aim at; and that he can in honour deprive me of the right which I claim to dictate the means of accomplishing it, let him avowedly take the lead; but if I am to be charged with the consequences of it, or if the right which I claim be justly mine, let him allow me to possess and exercise it. It is impossible to combine the principles of enterprise and inaction in the same general measure, and as impossible for his sentiments and mine to be brought into agreement on the subject of the Mahratta war. I have in vain laboured to accommodate them by a studied attention to his opinions in every measure which I have ventured to propose in the course of the last fifteen months, and have restrained myself from urging others which, however proper and

necessary for the occasion exclusively considered, were inconsistent with the actual state and temper of this Government."* Francis replied by denouncing the entire conduct of the war and refusing to sanction any measure until a general outline of the whole campaign was submitted to him. Hastings felt the time for action had arrived. He, however, never allowed himself to act on impulse, or to be led by temper. He wrote to his friend:—"I debated with myself a long time how I should act. I now saw plainly that Mr. Francis had deceived me, and that I had no alternative but to let him take the rule and laugh at my credulity, or make it a matter too serious for derision, and to expose the fallacy which he had thus unworthily practised upon me. This I did in a very strong but deliberate and temperate charge which I had prepared for the next Council day, which was Monday, the 3rd July."† The charge was not laid before the Council till six weeks afterwards, during which time negotiations were being conducted for both opponents to withdraw their respective minutes. On the 14th August, when Hastings saw that all attempts to arrive at a compromise were hopeless, he sent it to Francis with a private note,‡ and next day

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 26th June 1780, Vol. II, page 701.

† Memoirs of Warren Hastings, by Gleig, Volume II, page 304.

‡ "Judging it unbecoming to surprise him with a minute at the Council

it was laid before the Council. It opens with the assumption that the minute signed by Francis and Wheler attacking the war was written entirely by the former, and with an expression of disappointment that the hint conveyed by Hastings had not "awakened, in the breast of Francis, if it were susceptible of such sensations, a consciousness of the faithless part he was acting towards him."*

"I have been disappointed, and must now assume a plainer style and a louder tone. In a word, my objections do not lie to the special matter of his minutes, to which I shall separately reply, but to the spirit of opposition which dictated them. I have lately offered various plans for the operations of the war. These have been successively rejected, as I have successively amended and endeavoured to accommodate them to Mr. Francis's objections. I had a right to his implicit acquiescence. I have lastly proposed a service requiring immediate execution, and I have freed it from the only objection formally made to it."

"In answer he says that he adheres to the reasons which had before induced him to withhold his consent, and composedly invites me to lay before the Board a complete detail of the plan for conducting the war, a comparative statement of the whole of the object with the whole of the means of attaining it, and the final extent of my demands on the Mahrattas, or what concession I would make to them, and he promises to enter into the consideration of these points with

table or send it first to the Secretary, I enclosed it in a note to him that evening."—*Memoirs of Warren Hastings, by Gleig, Volume I, page 307.*

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 20th July 1780, Vol. II, page 711.

the utmost candour. If his design in this enquiry was simply to gain information, I might refer him to the large and confidential discussions in which I have laid all my views open to his, with all the grounds on which they were formed. If his purpose was to enable him to form a more clear or competent judgment of the plans which I have proposed, its object would be lost in the time required for the deliberation. But in truth, I do not trust to his promise of candour, convinced that he is incapable of it, and that his sole purpose and wish are to embarrass and defeat every measure which I may undertake, or which may tend even to promote the public interests, if my credit is connected with them. Such has been the tendency and such the manifest spirit of all his actions from the beginning. Almost every measure proposed by me has for that reason had his opposition to it. When carried against his opposition, and too far engaged to be withdrawn, yet even then and in every stage of it his labours to overcome it have been unremitted, every disappointment and misfortune have been aggravated by him, and every fabricated tale of armies devoted to famine, or to massacre have found their first and ready way to his office, where it was known they would meet the most welcome reception. To the same design may be attributed the annual computation of declining finances and an exhausted treasury. Computations which, though made in the time of abundance, must verge to truth at last, from the effect of a discordant Government, not a constitutional decay. To the same design shall I attribute the policy of accelerating the boded event, and creating an artificial want, by keeping up an useless hoard of treasure and withholding it from a temporary circulation."

"I am aware of the answer which will be made to these imputations, and I will anticipate it. Mr. Francis may safely

deny them, for they are incapable of positive evidence. He may complain of the injustice and indecency of assuming the interpretation of his thoughts, and assigning intentions to him, upon the reality of which he alone can pronounce with certainty. He may claim an equal right to recriminate upon me, and to pass the same free judgment upon the motives which have influenced my public actions. Against such conclusions I trust that my character will be sufficient to defend me, unless some known instance of it can be produced as a warrant for them, and such I am certain does not exist, either known or unknown"

"My authority for the opinion which I have declared concerning Mr. Francis depends upon facts which have passed within my own certain knowledge. I judge of his public conduct by my experience of his private, which I have found to be void of truth and honour. This is a sure charge, but temperately and deliberately made from the firm persuasion that I owe this justice to the public and to myself, as the only redress to both, for artifices of which I have been a victim, and which threaten to involve their interests with disgrace and ruin—the only redress for a fraud for which the law has made no provisions is the exposure of it."*

In support of this allegation Hastings proceeded to quote the first article of the agreement, and he added—"By the sanction of this engagement and the liberal professions which accompanied it, I was induced to part with the friend to whose generous and honourable support steadfastly yielded in a course of six years I am indebted for the existence of the little

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 20th July 1780, Vol. II, page 711.

power which I have ever possessed in that long and disgraceful period to throw myself on the mercy of Mr. Francis, and on the desperate hazard of his integrity. It was impossible to afford a stronger demonstration of the good faith with which I entered into this accommodation, nor of my confidence in his, than thus consenting to deprive myself of the means of breaking the engagement on my part, and of preventing the breach of it on his; and surely this difference in our relative situations ought to have impressed him with a sense of what he owed to the delicacy attending it, and have made him dread even an approach towards the precise line of his obligations by the slightest advantage taken of my inability to repel it, and how much more ought it to have restrained him from the direct transgression of it."*

After the Council had risen, Hastings received a challenge from Francis which was accepted. On the morning of the 17th August, the duel took place, and Francis was shot through the body. On the 11th of September he again took his seat at the Council Board and delivered in a minute in answer to the charges brought against him by Hastings. In it he stated:—

"On the point in issue I can only declare, as I do now in the most solemn manner, that I never was party to the en-

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 20th July 1780, Vol. II, page 712.

gagement stated by Mr. Hastings or had a thought of being bound by it. In one of our conversations in February last, he desired me to read a paper of memorandums, among which, I presume, this article was inserted. I returned it to him the minute I had read it with a declaration that I do not agree to, or hold myself bound by, the contents of it, or to that effect. From that time I have never seen the paper."*

After denying that he had bound himself to any agreement, Francis stated that "the agreement he meant to enter into with respect to the Mahratta war was to prosecute the operations actually existing on the Malabar coast, which since the campaign has begun, and General Goddard had already taken the field, I thought should be pushed on as vigorously as possible."* To support this declaration he argued that at the time the Malwa expedition had never been even hinted to him, and there was "a strong presumption that up to that period the Governor General had not had that measure in contemplation, or that he must then have abandoned all thoughts of it."*

As to Mr. Barwell having gone home only on the strength of the agreement having been made he remarked :—

"I believe it, for instance, to be the opinion of many well-informed persons in this settlement, as it is now firmly my own, that Mr. Barwell was determined to go home last season at all events, and that the *Swallow* was kept for several

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 11th September 1780, Vol. II, page 715.

months on purpose for him. If so, Mr. Hastings gained something, and could lose nothing, by his agreement with me. * * * * * But as Mr. Barwell's going home was never demanded by me, nor ever entered into the agreement. I have no concern in Mr. Hastings' motives for consenting to it."*

Barwell no doubt was most anxious to escape from the thraldom of a thankless office, but he had promised Hastings in the most public manner at the Council Board "to retract the intention of leaving."† He could not break the promise without the consent of Hastings, and it is extremely improbable that Hastings would have given his consent unless he had made an agreement with Francis. Months previous to the quarrel, Hastings wrote as follows to a friend:—"Mr. Barwell on the strength of this negotiation has *half* taken his passage in the *Swallow* which will be despatched express to England as soon as this point is determined." At least one well-informed person did not consider that Barwell, as Francis stated, was determined to go home at all events. Sir Elijah Impey, in a letter dated the 18th August 1780, the very day the duel was fought between Hastings and Francis, wrote—"Mr. Barwell left this country on the strongest assurances that Mr. Francis would coincide with Mr. Hastings, *or he would never have gone.*"

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 11th September 1780, Vol. II, page 717
† Ditto ditto 25th January 1779, Vol. II, page 666.

Hastings did not reply to the minute of Francis for some time as "other cases of a stronger obligation have required and have engrossed the whole of my attention and I now revert to it with reluctance as to a necessary yet unavailing, duty."* He re-affirmed with the utmost earnestness that there was an engagement. "What that engagement was I have expressed in terms in my minute of the 3rd July. Mr. Francis in answer declares, and 'in the most solemn manner, that he never was party to the engagement stated by me, or had a thought of being bound by it.' What can I say to such a declaration but to declare on my part in as solemn a manner that Mr. Francis was a party to the engagement which I have stated? This I now do most solemnly declare, and may God be the judge between us."† He asserted that it was Sir John Day who proposed to him an accommodation with Francis, and that he accepted the offer solely on the indispensable condition "that Mr. Francis should agree to depart from his opposition to the political measures proposed by me, and allow me, without exception or qualification, to prescribe the mode of conducting the Mahratta war. This point was a long time contested by Mr. Francis, but was at length adjusted finally in this manner, that Mr. Francis should

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 13th November 1780, Vol. II, page 734.
† Ditto ditto 13th November 1780, Vol. II, page 736.

not oppose me, nor yet charge himself with the responsibility of any proposal made by me which had any relation to the war; but support it by his vote at the result of a general measure which he had originally disapproved, and which he now left with the responsibility properly annexed to its original contriver."*

Hastings proceeds to state:—

"This point being thus settled I drew it up in writing on a small piece of paper in the words which I have already quoted, with other propositions, of which some had, and some had not, received our final and mutual agreement. ***** This paper, with some apology I showed to Mr. Francis, desiring him to read it attentively, and to inform me whether he agreed to the conditions as I had expressed them, or to point out his exceptions. To the first article, which is that of the present question, he replied hastily, and with every appearance of satisfaction, that he entirely agreed to it, adding among other expressions, as I well remember, that his meaning plainly was not to avail himself of Mr. Barwell's departure from the Council to oppose me in any political point which he could not have carried had Mr. Barwell continued. The other articles received some variations and were all finally regulated at the same meeting. Of these, as they do not relate to the question before me, I shall take no further notice. For the truth of this narrative I appeal to Sir John Day, to whom I daily communicated what passed on this business, and to Mr. Barwell, to whom I in like manner related the daily progress of it. They will both attest that my relation of it at the time was exactly the same as I now repeat it. It is impossible to

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 13th November 1780, Vol. II, page 736.

suggest a motive which I could have had to deceive them at such a time and on such a subject, and as impossible that I myself should be deceived when I took such means to ascertain it. Yet Mr. Francis affirms that 'he returned the paper to me the moment he had read it with a declaration that he did not agree to it, or held himself bound by the contents of it."*

Hastings met the statement of Francis, that the agreement which he meant to enter into with respect to the Mahrattas was limited to the operations on the Malabar Coast, by quoting an article of a treaty with the Rana of Gohud which clearly proved that a diversion in the province of Malwa formed a part of the measures projected and actually existing before the agreement was concluded. He added—"When I proposed the execution of it other circumstances had recently occurred. General Goddard had solicited us to make such a diversion in his favour, and the Commander-in-Chief had passionately recommended it as the only means of bringing the war to a speedy termination."† Francis replied: "In an argument of the kind the strictest precision of dates should be observed and the facts stated in the order in which they happened. On this principle I join issue with the

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 13th November 1780, Vol. II, page 736.

† Ditto ditto 13th November 1780, Vol. II, page 737.

Governor General and affirm in his own terms that *when he proposed the execution of the measure (that is, on the 12th June last) General Goddard had not solicited us to make a diversion in his favour.* The fact, if it exists, is capable of immediate and direct proof."* Hastings supplied the immediate and direct proof by producing a letter from General Goddard, forwarded through the Commander-in-Chief, which contained the following words: "It would certainly be of advantage to the operations of the war on this side to cause a powerful diversion to be made on the other, which could not fail to distress and divide their attention exceedingly."† With regard to the request of Francis that the strictest precision of dates should be observed, Hastings remarked: "In compliance with the rule prescribed by Mr. Francis I have been careful to annex the dates to the preceding extracts and for greater precision will repeat them with the facts stated in the order in which they happened. General Goddard's letter to Sir Eyre Coote is dated the 28th March and was recorded in our Consultation of the 29th May. My minute which contained the first proposition of the expedition was dated the 12th June."† Francis tried to escape from the dilemma in which he

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 13th November 1780, Vol. II, page 739.
† Ditto ditto 13th November 1780, Vol. II, page 743.

was placed by a petty quibble. He wrote: "In denying that General Goddard *had solicited us to make such a diversion in his favour*, I took the proposition literally as it was stated. I was perfectly sure that he had never addressed the Board to that effect, and that a request or opinion from him had never been urged in support of the motion of the 12th of June. Whether his letter to the Commander-in-Chief, recorded on the 29th of May, be equivalent to a solicitation to us to make a diversion in his favour in the sense in which the fact was asserted and denied, I submit to judgment."* Hastings indignantly answered: "Mr. Francis may avail himself as he can of the distinction between a solicitation made by General Goddard through the channel of the Commander-in-Chief to the Board and one directly addressed to the Board. It is sufficient for me that it came regularly before us. I shall not waste my time nor his in such a discussion. I repeat that Mr. Francis's engagement was absolute and unqualified; that in his own explanation of it the measure in question made a part of it since it was found peculiar to it and existed at the time. The assertion that I might have abandoned it in February is no proof that I did not. It was proposed, or, to use Mr. Francis's words, it 'was renew-

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 13th November 1780, Vol. II, page 744.

ed' in June. My right to his concurrence in it remained the same notwithstanding any intermediate suspension of it."* Thus ended the long war between Hastings and Francis. No impartial judge can read the respective minutes of the two men without coming to the conclusion that Francis was guilty of a gross breach of faith.

Hastings had excused himself for delaying to answer the minute of Francis on the ground that matters of greater importance had engrossed his attention. The matter of greater importance was the preservation of the State from the formidable league formed for the destruction of it. News had reached the Council from Madras that Hyder had entered the Carnatic, destroyed an army, and driven Sir Hector Munro to the walls of Fort St. George. Sir Edward Hughes sent tidings of his having received undoubted intelligence that seven sail of the line and seven thousand land forces had left France and were intended to co-operate with the enemies of England in India. Thirty thousand Mahratta horses were encamped on the western frontier of Bengal; an invasion of Behar by the Mahrattas was also expected; the Nizam professed hostility; Nujiff Khan threatened Oude and the forces

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 13th November 1780, Vol. II, page 744.

of Mahdajee Sindia threatened Corah and Allahabad, while General Goddard was opposed by the whole power of Poona. Then the spirit, judgment, and decision of Hastings shone forth. At a meeting of the Council held on the 25th September 1780, he declared it was not a time "for either long deliberation at home or the formal and tedious process of negotiations abroad." The crisis demanded "the most instant, powerful, and even hazardous exertion of the Government to avert the event portended by so many concurrent difficulties."* He proposed, though his army was small and his treasury almost exhausted, that a considerable supply of treasure and a large body of troops should be sent to Madras, and that Sir Eyre Coote should be requested to take the command of the Carnatic Army. His "military experience," he wrote, "and above all the high estimation in which his name is held by the world, and especially by that part of it where it was principally acquired, mark him as the only possible instrument to retrieve our past disgraces, or to preserve the British interests and possessions in the Carnatic from utter ruin. Our armies which have been so long formed to the habits of conquest will not easily recover from the impression of the dreadful reverse which has lately befallen them,

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., September 1780, Vol. II, page 718.

nor be brought to act with their former confidence under unsuccessful commanders. The addition of numbers will not relieve their apprehensions, and will but contribute to oppress the hands which have been already proved too weak to sustain the weight of an inferior charge."* To all the propositions except the motion respecting the Commander-in-Chief, Francis and Wheler objected on the ground that Bengal was their first object, that the danger was at their door, and consequently they could spare no troops and not half the supply of treasure which Hastings proposed to send to Madras. Sir Eyre Coote concurred with the Governor General and the casting vote of Hastings preserved India to Great Britain.

His opposition to the relief of our defeated army at Madras was the last important official act of Philip Francis. In November he set sail for England, a disappointed and baffled man. The two objects nearest to his heart, the humiliation of Hastings and the government of India, had eluded his grasp. "I am now," he wrote shortly after he landed, "I think on the road to be Governor of Bengal which I believe is the first situation in the world attainable by a subject?" But he had miscalculated the mental vigour and pertina-

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., September 1780, Vol. II, page 719.

city of his opponent. The struggle between them for five years had been a severe one, and Francis left India defeated only to renew the war in England. With ceaseless vigilance and concentrated industry he worked to procure the recall of his enemy and to gain the coveted office. He enjoyed the triumph of seeing his foe impeached, and he endured the bitter disappointment of seeing him acquitted after a trial of seven years during which his activity to secure a conviction was unremitting to the end. The inveterate hostility which he displayed towards the accused created a profound prejudice against Francis, and so materially helped to deprive him of the great ambition of his life. "I will never be concerned," he said, in bitterness of soul, "in impeaching anybody. The impeachment of Mr. Hastings has cured me of that folly. I was tried and he was acquitted." But there was about his nature a pertinacity which nothing could subdue. Six and twenty years did he pursue with unwearied zeal and industry his object. Then, when Pitt died and the Whig party came into office, he believed the prize to be within his grasp. The death of Cornwallis had left the Governor Generalship of India once more vacant. But the new Ministers, as Lord Brougham said, could no more have obtained the East India Company's consent to the appointment of Francis than they could have transported the Himalaya moun-

tains to Leadenhall Street.* The fixed ideas and ungovernable temper of the man must have brought ruin to their dominion. In one of the last speeches he ever delivered in the House of Commons, Francis denounced the second Mahratta war in the same vigorous terms in which he had denounced the first Mahratta war in the Council chamber at Bengal. He regarded our successes in India in the same light that he regarded our successes in the Peninsula, as a series of mistakes, and Hastings and Wellington he considered to be both bunglers.† The appointment of Lord Minto to the Governor Generalship put an end to the dream of his life.‡ He never recovered the disappointment and the bitter remembrance of failure accompanied him into retirement. On the 25th March 1807 he asked a few questions on the affairs of India, including the mutiny of Vellore, and this was the last act of the long and active political career of Philip Francis.

* Statesmen of the time of George III.—*Brougham.*

† Memoirs of Sir Philip Francis.—*Merivale, Volume II, page 369.*

‡ "On the death of Lord Cornwallis my right or claim to succeed him, though supported by His Royal Highness, was superseded by the coalition in 1806."—*Memorandum written by Francis.*

CHAPTER V.

BENARES AND THE OUDE BEGUMS.

At a consultation held on the 26th September 1780, Sir Eyre Coote presented a plan for the defence of Bengal and Oude which he had sketched at the desire of the Board. As an invasion of Behar was expected, Sir Eyre Coote proposed to station a large body of infantry in that province, together with two regiments of horse and one thousand or as many of Cheyt Sing's cavalry as they could procure. This was the origin of the demand for cavalry from Cheyt Sing. It was suggested by Eyre Coote and not by Hastings, who is accused by Macaulay of making the demand in order to fasten a quarrel on Cheyt Sing whom he had determined to plunder.* On the 2nd November the attention of the Board was again drawn to the want of cavalry, and Hastings was requested to write to Cheyt Sing for such as he could spare. In December the Resident of Benares wrote to Hastings that he had repeatedly pressed the Raja on the subject of the cavalry but could obtain no answer. The next month he wrote that the Raja said he had but thirteen hundred in his service, and that all except two hundred and fifty were

* Macaulay writes:—"Hastings was determined to plunder Cheyt Sing and for that end to fasten a quarrel on him. Accordingly the Raja was now required to keep a body of cavalry for the service of Government."

absolutely necessary for collecting the revenue. On the 21st May 1781 Hastings proposed to the Board that he should visit Oude in order to have an interview with the Nawab, whose province had fallen into a state of great disorder and confusion. He also stated that he hoped to take advantage of his visit to Oude to conclude negotiations with the Raja of Benares. At this time the Council consisted only of two members—Wheler and Hastings—and as the latter had the casting vote the request was purely formal. Hastings proposed that his colleague should during his absence consider himself "as possessed of the full powers of the Governor General and Council of this Government, as in effect he is by the Constitution, and he may be assured that if sanction and concurrence shall be or be deemed necessary for the confirmation of this measure, he shall receive them."* He also formally procured from the Council credentials which, besides granting to him power to make treaties with any of the Chiefs or Powers of Hindustan, also invested him "with full power and authority to form such arrangements with the Raja of Benares for the better government of the zemindary, and to perform such acts for the improvement of the interest which the Hon'ble Company possesses in it, as he shall think fit and consonant to the mutual relation and actual engagement subsisting

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 3rd July 1781, Vol. III, page 765.

between the Company and the Raja."* Burke afterwards regarded this division of power as criminal. It was argued that the word arrangements plainly implied that the Governor was to arrange such acts as he should think consonant to the mutual engagement subsisting between the Company and the Raja in an amicable way, and not in a hostile manner. Lord Thurlow in discussing the charge quoted the precedents of Vansittart, Clive, and Cornwallis to show that Hastings had a right to delegate and assume the powers of Government on great and emergent occasions.

Before starting for Benares, Hastings informed Wheler, his colleague, and others that he intended to fine Cheyt Sing fifty lakhs of rupees. He was assured that he had amassed a very large sum of money, and he regarded his reluctance to aid the sovereign power as an additional proof of his disaffection and a grave offence, "and he determined," as he said, "to make him pay largely for his pardon, to exact a severe vengeance for his delinquency, and to draw from his guilt the means of relief to the Company's distress."† On reaching Benares Hastings transmitted to the Raja a statement of his offences. He informed him that the danger to

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 3rd July 1871, Vol. III, page 765.

† Ditto ditto 4th September 1781, Vol. III, page 789.

which the detachment of Colonel Camac was exposed was due to his not paying the war subsidy of 1780, which he by letter had guaranteed to do.

"Relying on this agreement and promise I gave orders to Mr. Fowke, who was then Resident at this place, to receive money and remit it to Colonel Camac for the pay of the army which had been ordered to march towards the Province of Malwa, and I made no other provision for it such was my confidence in your faith; but you deceived me, and after having made the first payment of a few rupees, either consulting the temper of the times, or conforming to a premeditated design, you by shifts and pretexts withheld the remainder until the army, for whose use it was intended, was reduced to the last state of distress. Many hundreds deserted, and had an enemy at that time appeared against them their total destruction would have been inevitable. In all this time daily applications were made to you by the Resident, and I wrote repeated letters to you, but you paid no regard to either." He added—"Besides this, I required, in the name of the Governor General and Council by letter, and ordered Mr. Fowke to repeat the requisition in person, that you should furnish a body of horse to assist and act with the armies of the Company; and when Mr. Markham succeeded Mr. Fowke I gave him orders to repeat the demand, which he did accordingly with frequent and almost *daily* importunity, limiting the number to *1,500* and afterwards to *1,000*. To this demand you returned evasive answers, nor to this hour have you contributed a single horseman."*

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 4th September 1781, Vol. III, page 782.

Hastings closes the letter in the following emphatic manner:—

"I pass over the instances of your conduct in which through the means of your secret agents you have endeavoured to excite disorder in the Government on which you depend, and your neglect of the duty which you owe to it, and to the subjects of this zemindary, by suffering the daily perpetration of robberies and murders, even in the streets of the city of Benares itself, to the great and public scandal of the English name, and in violation of one of the conditions on which you received the confirmation of this zemindary. But as the two foregoing instances amount to a direct charge of disaffection and infidelity to the Government on which you depend, and happened at a time in which it was your duty most especially to have exerted yourself in the support of its interests, I have therefore judged it proper to state them to you thus fully in writing, and to require your answer to them, and this I expect immediately." *

To the charges brought against him by Hastings, the Raja replied, "that he obeyed the orders with the utmost readiness. * * * * I sent first one lakh of rupees with an answer to your letter. Afterwards having paid to Mr. Fowke the sum of one lakh and seventy thousand rupees, I sent a letter requesting a further allowance of time to make some preparations. To this I received no reply. It being no time to delay notwithstanding this I was not a moment inattentive to this concern, and as soon as my Buxey arrived I paid

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 4th September 1781, Vol. III, page 783.

immediately the remaining part of the sum. The remitting of this to the army did not depend upon me; if any delay happened on this head I could not help it. If besides the payment of the money the remittance of it also to the army had rested with me, a delay of this kind should not have happened." * The answer was false in all its parts. He did not pay the first lakh until the 5th August 1780, though the demand was made in the end of June, and then he refused to pay any further sum until he had got an answer to a letter he had written to Hastings requiring further time to dispose of his effects. To this representation the Raja said he received no reply, though a reply was immediately sent, strongly expressive of the Board's displeasure at his excuses, which they said they knew to be futile. This expression of displeasure did not hasten the payment, which was not finally made until the 18th of October 1780, although the Raja promised it in the month of July. With regard to his not furnishing cavalry the Raja replied: "In compliance with your wishes I collected five hundred horses and a substitute for the remainder five hundred burkundasses, of which I sent you information, and I told Mr. Markham that they were ready to go to whatever place they should be sent. No answer, however, came from you in this

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 4th September 1781, Vol. III, page 785.

head, and I remained astonished at the cause of it. Repeatedly I asked Mr. Markham about an answer to my letter about the horse, but he told me that he did not know the reason of no answer having been sent; I remained astonished." * The answer of Cheyt Sing well deserves the description given of it by Hastings; it was "not only unsatisfactory in substance but offensive in style." † It also afforded a strong indication of that spirit of independency which the Raja had for some years assumed. "Under these alarming appearances of the Raja's conduct and disposition," wrote Hastings, "I conceived myself indispensably obliged to form some immediate and decisive plan for obviating their consequences, and for the preservation of the Company's rights and interests in this zemindary. To have left him in the full exercise of powers which he had notoriously abused, and which it was to be apprehended he would employ to the most dangerous purposes, was totally inconsistent with the maxims of justice and prudence. To divest him entirely of the zemindary, though justifiable on the grounds stated above, would be attended with an appearance of severity, and might have furnished grounds for construction unfavourable to the credit of our Gov-

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 4th September 1781, Vol. III, page 784.

† Ditto ditto ditto, page 785.

ernment and to my own reputation, from the natural influence which every act of rigour exercised in the persons of men who stand in elevated stations is apt to impress on the minds of those who are too remote from the scene of action to judge by any evidence but of the direct facts themselves of their motives or propriety."* After weighing the conflicting considerations, Hastings ordered the Resident to put Cheyt Sing under arrest, and he sent two companies of the sepoys that he had brought with him to Benares to mount guard in the Raja's palace. A numerous body of armed men from the Raja's fortified palace at Ramnagar suddenly crossed the river, attacked and massacred the whole party. The sepoys having no ammunition fell without resistance. The Raja escaped and fled to his fortress Luteefgarh. Hastings in his letter dated 27th August 1781 writes:—

"On the 19th a large force returned to Ramnagar. Captain Blair with his battalion and Captain Mayaffre with the remainder of Major Popham's detachment were ordered to assemble for the attack of that place, and Major Popham to join and conduct the operations according to a concerted plan. The two corps having joined, Captain Mayaffre, the senior officer, without waiting for Major Popham, against orders, on the morning of the 20th, marched precipitately into the narrow streets of the town, where, in an instant, he fell with Captain Doxatt and 33 rangers, and almost all the sepoys of

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 4th September 1781, Vol. III, page 785.

Captain Blair's battalion that had entered with him; the rest of the detachment returned to Chunar with the loss of two guns, one howitzer, and 103 men of all denominations killed. I was in Benares with the broken remains of Major Popham's first party, consisting of about 400 men, in a place incapable of defence even with equal numbers. Preparations were making to attack me. I waited till the evening for a battalion ordered from Chunar to reinforce our party; at 7 repeated intelligence arrived that the Raja's boats were in motion; no news had arrived of the battalion from Chunar. It was resolved to meet it and march with it to Chunar. The resolution was instantly carried into execution. We passed the battalion which returned and overtook us, and on the 22nd at daybreak we gained the bank of the river opposite to Chunar, having met no opposition. The detachment crossed on the morning of the 23rd. The Raja's forces are divided between Ramnagar and Luteefgarh. His family is at Bidjeygur. His fixed establishment exceeds 10,000 men, and all his recruits bear arms. Major Popham is encamped on the plain east of the fort. I expect to be joined by a regiment from Cawnpore which are ordered for my guard at Lucknow. Lieutenant Polhill, with six companies of the Nabob's guard, are at hand, and Major Moses Crawford's battalions. My only distress is the want of money and is great."*

The insurrection at Benares seems to have produced a strong impression on the mind of Hastings, for he wrote to his colleagues: "My regrets for the past are personal. I shall ever retain the painful remembrance of that scene of blood of which I have

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 18th October 1871, Vol. III, page 792.

been too near a spectator, and which no future return of prosperity can ever efface from my mind; but in the prospect before me I think that I have every reason to expect the happiest termination of it in the extension of the power and influence of the Company, and that the past example may contribute to the permanency of both by prompting us to guard against the secret growth of the like evil which has produced it." *

In a letter dated the 4th September, Hastings announces to the Board that Captain Blair with his battalion and two companies of his own grenadiers and two guns (6-pounders) had attacked the enemy collected at Pateeta, seven miles from Chunar. "They were prepared to receive him, and made a very spirited resistance; after a very long action, the fortune of the day was happily turned in our favour by a bold but well-judged manœuvre. Captain Blair detached his two grenadier companies to attack two guns which were posted on the flank, and galled his troops exceedingly. The attack succeeded, and the two guns were turned on the enemy who were soon after totally routed. Captain Blair brought off three of their guns and spiked the fourth the carriage of which was disabled; he also brought away one of their tumbrils and all his own loaded with their ammunition, three more of their tumbrils with

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 18th October 1781, Vol. III, page 798

much loose powder were blown up on the field, Captain Blair having no means of bringing them away. He was obliged to leave about 1,500 of their shot piled in a village. The enemy's numbers are reputed 8 or 9,000 men. Captain Blair judges them from appearance to be only 3,000 or 4,000; they were their prime men. Our loss, which I add with regret, exceeds 105 killed and wounded, theirs must be proportionately more, though unknown. It is remarkable that the enemy's artillery and carriages made at Ramnagar are almost equal to ours; their cartridges and portfires compounded with equal skill, and their powder much better." *

Information having reached Major Popham regarding the state of the two fortresses of Lutteefpoor and Pateeta, which led him to suppose that they might be easily captured, he determined to attack them without delay, and for that purpose divided his army into two detachments. "The first detachment," wrote Hastings, "marched on the night of 15th by a large circuit through almost impracticable ways. But the spirit of the officers and men surmounted every difficulty. In places where the guns could not be drawn by bullocks the sepoys lifted them up the rocks, and at length, on

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 18th October 1781, Vol. III, page 803.

the morning of the 26th they arrived at the heights lying behind and above the fort of Lutteefpoor, at a place called Lora, which commands a pass descending to Lutteefpoor, and reputed inacessible against opposition but from above. The profound secrecy with which this expedition was undertaken, and to which the security of the enemy in a region so unfrequented not a little contributed, prevented any opposition to our troops in the difficult parts of their route. Their first movement only but neither their strength nor destination was known till their very near approach. At Lora they met a body of 2,000 of the enemy, which they defeated and dispersed with little loss on our side, but on theirs of 200 men killed on the spot. The next morning they took possession of the pass and of the fort of Lutteefpoor which they found evacuated." *

On the 25th September Hastings returned to Benares where he found the city restored to a state of order and tranquillity. He issued proclamations offering pardon to all except Cheyt Sing and his brother, "whom their late rebellious conduct and their rancour manifested to our nation in the deliberate murder of many of our soldiers, and even unarmed passengers who had the misfortune to fall into their hands, precluded from every title of

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 18th October 1781, Vol. III, page 806.

mercy."* A grandson of Raja Bulwunt Sing by a daughter was proclaimed Raja with great form and solemnity. Hastings also took steps for the protection of the persons and property of the inhabitants of the sacred city. When the sovereignty of Benares was ceded to the Company the superintendence of the police was formally made over by the English to Cheyt Sing, but the arrangement proved a disastrous failure. "From this period," wrote Hastings, "the appearance of public justice was gradually effaced till at last without any system of police, any courts of judicature, or any awe of the sovereign power, the inhabitants of Benares were guilty of enormities and crimes which reflected the greatest disgrace on the Government to which they were subjects. The relations and dependants of the Raja, or the merchants whose credit was useful in the payment of his revenue, might violate the rights of their fellow citizens with impunity, and the sacred character of a Brahmin or the high rank of the offender were considerations which stamped a pardon on the most flagitious crimes." †

To remedy this scandalous state of affairs Hastings established distinct departments for the police and for the civil and criminal jurisdic-

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 18th October 1781, Vol. III, page 806.

† Ditto Ditto, 12th November 1781, Vol. III, page 815.

tion of the city, and placed them under the regulation and control of a Chief Magistrate who was subject to the immediate orders of the Governor General and Council. The person chosen by Hastings to fill the office of Chief Magistrate was a Mahomedan, Ally Ibrahim Khan, "a man who has long been personally known to myself and, I believe, to many individuals of our Government, and whose character for moderation, disinterestedness, and good sense will bear the tests of the strictest enquiry."* The Board on hearing of this appointment expressed a regret that "the incapacity of the more dignified characters of the Gentoo religion to conduct the management of such a trust prevented you, and must ever do so from promoting them to high office." † Regarding the measures which Hastings had taken for the better administration of the city of Benares his colleagues expressed their warmest approval in the following terms:

"Your guarded attention to the security and convenience of the pilgrims, and your abolition of those taxes and embarrassments which have grown against them from rapacity of a corrupt Government, are peculiarly to your credit."

They added—

"Even in a political view your arrangements upon the

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 12th November 1781, Vol. III, page 816.

† Ditto Ditto 3rd December 1781, Vol. III, page 820.

subject are interesting, and may lead to the most important consequences. All Indostan, from the source of the Ganges to Cape Comorin, is interested in the happy regulation of the police of Benares, and the unpolluted tranquillity of its colleges. The leading Mahrattas with whom we are at war are strongly attached to this supposed residence of the purity of their religion.

"From these considerations we beg leave to suggest to you whether it would not be proper to publish in the different languages of India the regulations you have adopted. A very short time will spread them over all Indostan, which, with the reports of the pilgrims upon their return, cannot but impress the natives with the mild liberality and attention of our Government.

"Even among the different nations of Europe whose learned enquiries have been of late particularly directed to the religious antiquities and early knowledge of the sciences in this country, it will be matter of satisfaction and admiration and of consequent credit to our Government that Benares, in which you were so dangerously exposed, should remain so deeply indebted to your careful regulation and protection." *

The measures so warmly applauded by his colleagues were afterwards as forcibly denounced by the managers of the impeachment. The first charge brought against Hastings was regarding his conduct towards Cheyt Sing. He was accused of violating a treaty with an inde-

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 3rd December 1781, Vol. III, page 820.

pendent Prince, unjustly compelling him to pay five lakhs of rupees annually for three years, intending to impose upon him an enormous fine for imputed delinquency, and causing his person to be arrested. Burke took infinite pains to prove that Cheyt Sing was made independent of the English Government in every respect except that of paying to it annually twenty-three lakhs of rupees, and that the Government had irrevocably bound itself down not to exact in any case a larger sum. It is however clear beyond all question that Cheyt Sing was a dependent on Sujah-Dowlah* and afterwards on the British Government, and consequently responsible to Hastings in his character as Governor General. As Hastings said in his defence at the bar of the House of Commons: "He was neither more nor less than a zamindar. His sunnud and potah were made out, not from a copy of stipulations and agreements between him and the Company

* See translation of the new coulnama or agreement and translation of the pottah given by the Nawab Sujah-ud-Dowla to Cheyt Sing.—*Secret Select Committee's Proc., 4th October 1773, Vol. I, page 56.*

"Whereas by virtue of a treaty with the Nawab Asoph-ud-Dowla concluded on the 20th of Rabbey-ul-Awul 1189 Hijeree, or 21st May 1775 the government and sovereignty of the Sircars above mentioned has been ceded to the Hon'ble East India Company from the 4th Jemmady-ul-Awul 1184 Hijeree, or 4th July 1775: the said East India Company therefore, in virtue of the rights thereby obtained, do confirm unto Raja Cheyt Singh the Zamindary, Ameeny and Fouzdary of the said Sircars, agreeably to the Zemmun, together with the Cutwallees of Jaunpore and Benares and the mint of Benares, from the said date."—*Secret Select Committee's Proc., 15th April 1776, Vol. II, page 512.*

but from the common formulæ of such instruments granted to zamindars in the Company's original provinces. The Raja never pretended any right to stipulate or demand; he was content with what the Company was pleased to allow him." The sunnud distinctly states that "the government and sovereignty of the Sircars had been ceded to the Hon'ble East India Company, and that the said East India Company, therefore, in virtue of the rights obtained confirmed unto Cheyt Sing the zamindary." The sunnud also granted to him the right of coining money on the condition "that whatever gold and silver shall be coined in the mint, the said Raja shall coin conformably to his muchulka." The sunnud also stipulated that "all former sunnuds do become null and void." A pottah or document specifying the condition on which lands are held, was also framed. A kabulyat or agreement was also drawn up which stated—"It shall be my duty to do everything that may be needful and usual for the interest of the country." On the 13th June 1776 the Resident at Benares wrote that the Raja objected to signing any muchulka, or penalty bond, and to the insertion of any muchulka, or penalty bond in the sunnud or pottah. The Board replied: "As we have not insisted on the insertion of the clause respecting the penalty in the agreement of the Raja, the instrument which is to be executed by him cannot now be

called a muchulka. We thereby authorize you to erase this word where it has been mentioned in the sunnud and pottah transmitted to you, as well as in the titles of the kabulyat, which you are to obtain from him." On the 17th July 1776 the Resident informed the Board that Cheyt Sing "has declined the acceptance of the sunnud and pottah for which he assigns these reasons, that any erasement in a sunnud or public deed is totally unprecedented in the usages of this country; that the clause in the sunnud by which the former sunnuds are declared to be null is likewise contrary to custom and practice, and further that in the above clause the word 'sunnuds' being used in the plural number, the coulnama which he received with the former sunnuds and pottah is thereby likewise rendered void and of no effect. The Raja objects to the execution of the kabulyat on account of the clause it contains by which the former sunnuds are annulled." * The Board ordered "that the Secretary prepare a new sunnud and pottah omitting the word 'muchulka' and the sentence declaring the former sunnuds to be null, and that these be transmitted to Mr. Fowke with directions to receive back the temporary pottah and grant which were first allowed him." * On the 25th

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 29th July 1776, Vol. II, page 549.

September 1776 the Resident informed the Board that he had invested Cheyt Sing with a khelaut or robe of office, and informed him that the continuance of this indulgence would depend on his own punctuality in completing his payments and adhering faithfully to the other conditions on which he holds his zemindary. "I likewise delivered to him the sunnuds transmitted to me by Mr. Secretary Auriol under date the 4th September 1776, and received back from him the former sunnuds which I herewith enclose."* In the charges brought against Hastings by the House of Commons, it was stated that neither the first set of deeds nor the second set of deeds was entered in the records or transmitted to the Court of Directors. Hastings, in his defence, stated that he had no concern in making out the sunnuds or omitting to record them; that these practical operations belonged to the Secretary of the Board under the superintendence of the majority, of which at this time he was not a part, and that if there was any misconduct the majority were answerable for it. The first deeds were however received and are now printed. There was no need to record the second deeds as the alterations were distinctly stated. These alterations

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 21st October 1776, Vol. II, page 557.

do not affect the main question that Cheyt Sing was not a sovereign, but the zamindar of Benares by a sunnud granted to him by the English, and that he made an agreement binding himself to do "eveything that might be useful and needful for the interest and security of the country." The interest and security of the country demanded that he should contribute money and troops for its defence. It was also in accordance with long established custom that a vassal should afford aid to the sovereign State in money and troops. The conduct of Cheyt Sing, in hesitating to afford the necessary aid to his suzerain at a time of great danger was contumacious and refractory and deserving of punishment. Fifty lakhs was undoubtedly a large fine, but it by no means exceeded the ability of Cheyt Sing to pay it with ease, as is evident from the treasures he left behind in his fortresses without taking into consideration the gold and silver he exported beyond the frontier. But when we consider the state of India at that time, when we consider that the English were surrounded by enemies and in hourly expectation of the arrival of a powerful French armament, it is difficult to regard the imposition of even a too heavy fine on a refractory vassal as an act of criminality. In enforcing these demands Hastings was actuated by no personal or malicious motives, but was compelled by the pressing exigencies of the hour and the desire to

save India to Great Britain. "I had no other view in it," he said, "than that of relieving the necessities of the Company by an act which I considered to be strictly just."

When Hastings went to Benares the Government was in the utmost distress for money. There were several armies in the field, and the demands for treasure were various and immediate. The entire expense of all military operations fell on the treasury of Bengal, and the treasury of Bengal was empty. Heavy loans had been contracted, the credit of Government was low, and Hastings, as was natural under the circumstances, looked to the chief debtor of the Company for relief. The Vizier of Oude owed the Company a crore and a half of rupees. But the Vizier informed Hastings at Chunar, where he had gone to meet him, that his own funds were exhausted, and that it was no longer possible for him to maintain the English troops employed in protecting his territories. Hastings knew the statement to be true. The condition of Oude had for the past five years occupied his anxious attention. The settlement made at the death of the late Vizier against his strongest protests had proved a disastrous failure. Francis, Clavering and Monson had increased the hire of the English troops and at the same time deprived the Nawab of the means of paying for them. When his father Sujah-Dowlah

died he left about two millions of pounds buried in the vaults of the zenana. The widow and the mother of the deceased Prince, historically known as the Begums, claimed the whole of the treasure under the terms of a will which was never produced. The late Vizier though possessed of a large sum of money was also very deeply in debt, a considerable portion of the debt being due to the Company and his troops. The treasure was State property, and the debt due to the Company and the sums due to Sujah-Dowlah's army at his decease ought to have been paid from them. The widow, by Muhammadan law, was entitled only to one-eighth after the debts were paid, and a grandmother had no claim to inheritance when the daughter was living. The Begums however exercised the right of possession, and the Nawab did not interfere, either because he was too indolent or did not care to invade the rights of the zenana. He, however, obtained one loan from his mother* of about twenty-six lakhs of rupees, for which he gave her a jaghir of four times the value. In October 1775, when he was hard pressed for money both by the Company and by his army, he commenced through Mr. Bristow, the Resident, a negotiation for a fresh loan. Mr. Bristow, after informing the Board that neither the zemindars nor ryots would ever pay their rents, wrote as

* The Bahoo Begum.

follows: "To add to this unfortunate circumstance, the Nawab has not yet been able to procure any money from the Begum. Immediataly on his return from Fyzabad he stated his distresses to me, and begged of me to use my endeavours to persuade the Begum to assist him. I wished to have declined complying with His Excellency's request, especially after he had indirectly objected to my having any correspondence with her, but being sensible of his necessities, I consented upon the condition of his not expecting of me to use violent means. I accordingly went to Fyzabad and explained particularly in writing to the Begum how impossible it was for the Nawab to conduct his Government without her assistance, and likewise insinuated to her that she could not complain of him, for he had granted her an additional jagir of four lakhs a year for the sums he had already borrowed of her, and treated her with great respect. I further insinuated to her that the treasures she possessed were the treasures of the State, as she had not succeeded to them by any legal right, and they had been hoarded up to provide against an emergency. That that emergency was arrived, and I recommended it to her to spare His Excellency the sum of fifty lakhs as a donation. If this did not please her, to let the treasure be divided according to the laws of the Koran, or else grant him a loan and that I could engage for the re-payment of it."

"After much persuasion, the Begum agreed to pay the Nawab twelve lakhs on condition that the Company secured to her the possession of her jagirs for life, and that the Nawab did not interfere with her upon any account. I excused myself because of the insignificancy of the sum, but offered to comply with her terms in case of her granting fifty lakhs. This I had authority for from the Nawab, who, on desiring me to undertake the negociation, repeatedly and earnestly expressed his desire not to use any violence. And in order to prove it, he said 'he would submit to the Company's being mediators of all differences between him and the Begum. But it was hard, when reduced to such distress, that his mother should uselessly keep up immense treasuries."* An agreement was concluded between the Nawab and Begum that in consideration of his receiving thirty lakhs more on account of his patrimony he gave the Begum a full acquittal as to the rest, and secured her jagirs to her without interference for life. Mr. Bristow was guarantee to this treaty on the part of the Company. The impolicy of the agreement was apparent, but the Governor General and Council sanctioned it because, as they informed the Directors, the urgency of the case required it.

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 8th November 1773, Vol. II, page 439.

In December 1775, the Board received a long and curious letter from the Begum, in which she severely criticised the conduct of her son. By the agreement it was settled that she should liquidate eleven lakhs of the demand by giving goods, elephants, and camels. "I assented," she wrote, "concluding that as Mr. Bristow was a party in the affairs it would be conducted in a proper manner, but they valued the goods which they took at a fourth part of their intrinsic worth; how then could I make good the sum?"* She appealed to the feelings of Hastings by informing him that she "went to the Nawab when his hour of death approached and asked him to whose charge he left me. He replied—'Apply to Mr. Hastings whenever you have occasion for assistance; he will befriend you when I am no more and will comply with whatever you may desire of him.'"† She desired Hastings to cause the Nawab to dismiss Murteza Khan who was at that time the Minister, and to restore Mahomed Elich Khan and Mahomed Busheree Khan to their old offices, and she added:—"By them the revenues will be collected, and whatever sums are due to the English Chiefs I will cause to be paid out of the reve-

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 13th December 1775, Vol. II, page 465.

† Secret Select Committee's Proc., 13th December 1775, Vol. II, page 466.

nues. This I will strictly perform."* Hastings, who has been painted as a cruel tyrant, inflicting wanton injury on two helpless women, wrote a short minute on the letter in which he stated:—"All my present wish is that the orders of the Board may be such as may obviate or remove the discredit which the English name may suffer by the exercise or even the public appearance of oppression on a person of the Begum's rank, character, and sex. Had the Nawab chosen to have made use of the means with which his own power alone supplied him to exact money from the Begum, his mother, this Government would have wanted a pretext to interfere in her behalf. But as the representative of our Government has become an agent in this business, and has pledged the honour and faith of the Company for the punctual observance of the conditions under which it was concluded, we have a right to interfere, and justice demands it, if it shall appear that those engagements have been violated, and an injury offered to the Begum under the cover of the authority by which they were contracted. I am therefore of opinion and recommend that a letter be written by the Board to Mr. Bristow, commanding him to remonstrate to the Nawab against the seizure of the goods as his own original property, which

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 13th December 1775, Vol. II, page 467.

he received from his mother in payment of the eleven lakhs stipulated to be so made, to insist on the Nawab's receiving them in payment, and that he either admit of the valuation which she has put upon them, or that he allow them to be approved by persons appointed for that purpose by both parties."* The majority, however, were less disposed to favour the cause of the Begum. Monson wrote: "She should be informed of the sums of money the late Nawab owed this Government by treaty for services performed, and which were not liquidated at his death; that she received the advantages of the Rohilla conquest, the plunder of those countries being deposited with her; as she succeeded therefore to all the Nawab's wealth, it is just that she should discharge the demands due for those services by which she is the principal gainer. The Vizier's estate has not been divided according to the usual custom of Mahomedan Princes. The present dispute turns upon the value of goods, elephants, and camels. I do not conceive, according to strict justice, these effects to be the Begum's property; as I understand, women can claim a right only to what is within the zenana; but if it be a condition made by the Nawab with his mother that he should take these things in part payment of the thirty

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 3rd January 1776, Vol. II, page 471.

lakhs, the value of them should be ascertained by arbitration." *

Francis stated that he was "inclined to think with Colonel Monson that women can claim a right only to what is within the zenana. The property being determined, the value, if disputed, may be settled by arbitration or public sale. I cannot conceive that she has the least right to interfere in the Nawab's government. In a country where women are not allowed a free agency in the most trifling domestic affairs it seems extraordinary that this lady should presume to talk of appointing ministers and governing kingdoms."* The Board resolved that the letter of the Begum should be sent to the Resident and a full explanation of the matter demanded from him.

On the 3rd January 1776 Mr. Bristow wrote to the Board stating that, from the evidence he could gather, the complaints regarding the violence of the servants of the Nawab were totally unfounded. As to the complaint regarding the valuation of the property, he wrote: "I understand the late Vizier deposited the surplus of his revenues with the Begum, and having died intestate, or at least a will was never produced, though one is said to be secreted by the Begum, it left a door

* Secret Select Committee's Pro., 3rd January 1776, Vol. II, page 472.

open to the disputes which have happened, for according to the Koran and the usages of the country, the Nawab could claim an infinitely greater share than he has got. It is beyond a doubt that she has money, for her principal eunuch brought me a message one day, not as a matter of any secrecy or confidence, that the wealth the late Nawab had amassed was intended to supply an emergency. I answered the Nawab could not well want it at a greater one; and pressed her very earnestly to supply his necessary wants." He added—" The Begum had great influence in the late Vizier's time. On the Nawab Asoph-ul-Dowla's accession he at once placed the sole management in the hands of Murteza Cawn, which disgusted both her and her adherents, particularly her eunuchs who have their views in keeping the wealth in the Begum's possession. The principal, Behar Ally Cawn, enjoys her entire confidence; and how far she may be better affected to the English than the Nawab, I leave to the consideration of the Hon'ble Board from the following fact: On the conclusion of the treaty between the Company and the Nawab, the Begum blamed His Excellency very highly and insisted on his not ceding Benares, offering of herself a sum of money in lieu of it. The proposal was afterwards made to me by the Nawab, but I answered I was not authorized to accept an alternative, and that

if he intended to have me represent the matter to the Hon'ble Board, he should give me his instructions in writing and explain his sentiments himself to the Governor General, which he did not do."*

In order that the Board should have a knowledge of "the Begum's sentiments at the present juncture and of her temper," he enclosed her last letter to him. She wrote as follows: "You were a party in this affair and took from me the sum of 56 lakhs of rupees: if you will cause the 56 lakhs of rupees to be restored to me, then the coulnama will not be binding, and do not you then take any part in the affair, and then let Asoph-ul-Dowla and Murteza Cawn, in whatever manner they are able, take sums of money from me. They will then see the consequences."† Mr. Bristow informed the Board that, "while the Begum complains of the Nawab and the Minister, she forgets the conduct of her own servants, who refuse to acknowledge the Nawab's authority or to obey his decrees and beat his executive officers." Six months after the guarantee Mr. Bristow informed the Begum that the Vizier proposed a plan which would put an end to all future disputes. "It was that she gave up her jagirs and received the value in money; for, as His Excellency observed, two rulers are too much for

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 25th January 1776, Vol. II, page 485.
† Ditto ditto 25th January 1776. Vol. II, page 486.

one country." In December 1776 Mr. Bristow wrote that the Vizier intended to level the forts of the zemindars and to reduce their power as much as possible on account of their disobedience and disaffection. Hastings strongly remonstrated with the Nawab on his extravagance, the impolicy of his conduct, and earnestly advised him to dismiss from his presence the worthless favourities with which he was surrounded. To enforce his advice he plainly told him :—"The English if you do not follow it must break off their connection with you altogether." But the Nawab was unmoved by the constant remonstrances of the Governor General, and, when Hastings proceeded to Benares, policy and justice alike demanded that decisive steps should be taken to introduce order into the government of Oude. But no reform was possible until some measure was adopted which would enable the sovereign to liquidate his existing debts ; and in order to aid him to do this Hastings consented to the first article of the treaty proposed to him by the Nawab at Chunar. By this article the defence of Oude was to be left to one brigade, and the English officers who had been appointed to command the Vizier's corps were to be withdrawn. The Englishmen who had settled in Oude in various offices were also to leave the State. The Nawab on his part consented to separate his public from his private expenses;

to fix the amount of the latter; to reform his army; to entrust the public treasury to his minister under the inspection of the British Resident. By the second article it was stipulated: "That as great distress has arisen to the Nawab's government from the military power and dominion assumed by the jagirdars, he be permitted to resume such as he may find necessary, with a reserve that all such for the amount of whose jagirs the Company are guarantees shall, in case of the resumption of their lands, be paid the amount of their net collections through the Resident in ready money."* The article stated that the resumption of the jagirs should be general, and Hastings pressed on the Vizier the necessity of resuming those held by his worthless favourites. The Nawab however was only anxious to resume those which were held by his mother. This Hastings opposed strenuously, and a vast number of jagirs were resumed In consenting to the resumption of the Begum's jagirs much criminality has been imputed to Hastings, as their possession had been guaranteed by the English Government. Lord Thurlow argued that the resumption of the jagirs on the payment of a proper equivalent was no breach of engagement. "The subjects of the first country in the world," he said, "are obliged on all public

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 9th July 1783, Vol. III, page 988.

occasions to dispose of their property for an equivalent when the public good requires such a sacrifice; and in this case the experience of many years has proved the necessity of the measure." Hastings justified his action on the ground that the rebellious conduct of the Begum's was a sufficient reason for withdrawing our protection. "My Lords," he said, "at the time of my giving this consent I was, from the intelligence I had received, fully convinced of the Begum's disaffection to our Government. It was not my opinion only, but it was the general rumour of the country, that she and her ministers aided and supported Cheyt Sing in his rebellion. That such was the general rumour and public opinion is evident from the affidavits already before Your Lordships, and, notwithstanding the ingenuity of the managers who laboured to explain away their meanings, they still contain and afford the most ample proof of the hostile intentions both of the Begum and her ministers towards our Government. But had the continuation of this Session enabled me to enter into a detailed defence, I could have brought the most irresistible evidence to prove, not only the general rumour and opinion, but also that the Begum did, through her ministers, actually lend her assistance to our enemies."

Mill argues that the affidavits were worthless because the evidence was collected after Hastings

had given his consent to the resumption of the jagirs. We, however, find that, on the 8th September, eleven days before the Treaty of Chunar was signed, Colonel Hannay wrote as follows: "This town (Fyzabad) has more the appearance of belonging to Cheyt Sing than the Vizier. The Begums have placed guards to prevent any of my people going to the bazaar in it. Within these few days Shaik Chaan, with near 1,000 horse and foot, has marched from hence to Benares (they were raised here), and I must confess that for my own part I have no doubt but Jowar Ally Khan and Bahar Ally Khan, through their agents, stirred up all the disturbances which extend from hence to Zowey Azimgur."*

In a subsequent letter written immediately afterwards, Colonel Hannay writes: "I have before told you how violently the Begum's people inflame the present disturbances and in addition to this the principal Zemindars and Rajas have all certificates under the seal of Cheyt Sing that he will supply them with whatever money they may require for subsisting all the troops they can raise. In a very short time I apprehend the greatest part of the Nabob's dominions will be in the state we are in here, and it is the general belief of every man

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 28th July 1783, Vol. III, page 1004.

in this part of the country that the conduct I have related is a concerted plan for the extirpation of the English. What may be the situation of the rest of the Nabob's dominions I know not, but it is most certain that from Goonda to Maujid, and from Fyzabad to Benares District, and across from the Gogra to the Ganges, the country is in the utmost ferment. Should the present disturbances proceed from a plan of policy, it will be concealed from you as much as possible, and therefore I take all possible means of communicating to you what I really know to be facts. I know not whether the dâks pass freely from you to Lucknow, but if they do not, and no measure is immediately taken to bring about order and draw the troops together, we may be deprived of all possible means of assisting one another, and the army lost by detached regiments; we have no communications with Bengal, and the troops on this side of Benares are at present too much separated to yield one another timely assistance. I hope to God a sufficient force is ordered for the reduction of Cheyt Sing, *for the people who are daily sent to him, horse and foot, from Fyzabad* and the seat of rebellion I have before named is *very great.*" In his next letter dated the 13th he says: "It is impossible in the general insurrection which now reigns almost universally for me to get the force together the Nabob demanded, or to force my way to

you without a loss. The greatest anarchy prevails—the present insurrection is said and believed to be with an intention to expel the English."* He subsequently wrote: "I have already and repeatedly informed you of the dispositions of those in favour in Fyzabad, which has in fact been one of the great sources of the insurrection and the place of all others in the Vizier's dominions which has supplied Cheyt Sing with the greatest number of troops. The old Begum does in the most open and violent manner support Cheyt Sing's rebellion and the insurrection, and the Nawab's mother's accursed eunuchs are not less industrious than those of the Bunack Begum. Capital examples made of Jowar Ally Khan and Bahar Ally Khan would, I am persuaded, have the very best effects."†

The statements made by Colonel Hannay were corroborated by Captain Williams, who wrote: "Saadit Ally and the Begums are concerned deeply in the late business." Mill regards it as a most suspicious circumstance that these accusations were brought by Colonel Hannay and his officers "who were deeply interested in finding, for the disturbance of the country which they ruled, a cause different from their own malversations." But the accusations made by the Colonel were confirmed by the Resident who wrote: "The

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 28th July 1783, Vol. III, page 1004.

† Dfto Ditto 28th July 1783, Vol. III, page 1005.

truth of these positions I found most fully proved upon my return, but observed in particular that the most vigorous efforts were limited to the jagirdars, among whom the Begum, Fyzullah Khan, and Luttaffut Ally Khan distinguished themselves." The jagirdars were powerful noblemen who by the support of armed retainers were able to defy the power of the State. Among them none possessed greater power than the Bhow Begum, "whose power," as the Resident wrote, "is rendered the more pernicious and dangerous, first from its being wholly delegated to her servants, who have their own views of ambition and interest to answer, and in the next place from the reluctance with which the ministers, and even the Nawab himself, interfere with any concerns of the Begum." He added—"From these two circumstances, strengthened by the immense wealth in her possession, also intrusted to her two chief eunuchs, Bahar and Jowar Ally Khan, and her unreasonable expectations of support from the English Government, of all which she and her servants avail themselves to the utmost, she is become one of the most serious internal evils that among others seems to bid fair to give great disturbance to this country."* The Bhow Begum was described by the Resident as a woman of uncommonly violent temper. "Death and destruction is the least

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 12th June 1783, Vol. III, page 51.

menace she denounces upon the most trifling opposition to her caprice. By her own conduct, and that of all her agents and dependants during the Benares troubles, it may with truth and justice be affirmed, she forfeited every claim she had to the protection of the English Government, as she evidently, and, it is confidently said, avowedly espoused the cause of Raja Cheyt Sing, and united in the idea and plan of a general extirpation of their race and power in Hindustan."* Burke argued that these charges were brought against the Begum by Middleton, the Resident, to justify spoliation, but it is difficult to believe that every European officer employed in Oude conspired to slander the Begum and that a large number of witnesses perjured themselves to screen Hastings.† Hastings himself was thoroughly convinced of the rebellious conduct of the Begums‡ acting through

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 12th June 1783, Vol. III, page 51.

† "The notoriety of the rebellion of the Begum was such that one of the witnesses at Your Lordships' bar—Captain Wade I think—on being asked by a manager if he was applied to, to make an affidavit, said, that if any one in India had called upon him for such a purpose he should have thought they were joking"—Lord Thurlow.

‡ On the 21st February 1782 Hastings wrote to a friend: "On the revolt of Cheyt Sing she and the old Begum, Shuja Dowla's mother, raised troops, caused levies to be made for Cheyt Sing, excited all the zemindars of Gorrakpur and Bareech to rebellion, cut off many parties of sepoys; and the principal Aumul, and a favourite of the younger Begum openly opposed and attacked Colonel Gordon, one of our officers stationed in the neighbourhood. Let this be an answer to the men of virtue who may exclaim against our breach of faith and the inhumanity of declaring war against widows, princesses of high

their agents, and he considered their conduct terminated the guarantee given them by the English. "My Lords," he said in his defence, "I believe there is no state in the world that considers a guarantee made in favour of another state binding any longer than whilst they continue in arms with each other. The first hostile act of the party guaranteed is, and must be, a sufficient reason for withdrawing protection." To Hastings the resumption of the jagirs was not only a measure of sound policy but also just. He likewise considered it both impolitic and unjust to leave the Begums in the possession of a large amount of treasure. He wrote to the Board: "It may be necessary in this place to inform you that in addition to the former resolution of resuming the Begum's jagir, the Nawab had declared his resolution of reclaiming all the treasures of his family which were in their possession, and to which, by the Muhammadan laws, he was entitled. This resolution I have strenuously encouraged and supported, not so much for the reasons assigned by the Nawab as because I think it equally unjust and impolitic that they should be allowed to retain the means of which they have already made so pernicious a use by exciting disturbances in the country and a revolt against the Nawab, their sove-

rank, and defenceless old women. These old women had very nigh effected our destruction."—*Memoir of Warren Hastings, by Gleig, Volume I, page 456.*

reign. I am not too sanguine in my expectations of the result of these proceedings, but have required and received the Nawab's promise that, whatever acquisition shall be obtained from the issue of them, it shall be primarily applied to the discharge of the balance actually due from him to the Company."* The frankness of the last sentence reveals the existence of a force which influenced Hastings. The pressing need to recruit an exhausted treasury by the recovery of the Nawab's debt may have led him to be more rigor-

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 5th February 1782, Vol. III, page 836.

In 1803 Lord Valentia met at Lucknow Almas Ali Khan, the eunuch, regarding whose suffering Burke was so pathetic. He writes—"But the person I observed with the most curiosity was Almas Ali Khan, the eunuch so celebrated by Mr. Burke's pathetic account of the distress which his wives and children suffered from the barbarity of that 'Captain General in iniquity,' Mr. Hastings. He is a venerable old woman-like being, upwards of eighty, full six feet high, and stout in proportion. After all the cruel plunderings which he is stated as having undergone he is supposed to be worth half a million of money; and no wonder when it is considered that for a considerable time he was Aumul, or renter of nearly half the province of Oudh. The Nawab watches with care for his succession which by the Eastern custom belongs to him. With all his affluence Almas is but a slave, now nearly in his dotage, though formerly an active and intriguing courtier." Lord Valentia also writes: "Almas the eunuch paid me a visit: he is held here in much consideration from the prominent part he has borne in politics; from having once held as Aumul above half the province of Oudh, and from his consequently great riches. When Lord Wellesley was here he was very anxious for the honour of a visit from His Excellency, who at length complied, in order to conciliate a person whose vast property still gave him a great influence in Oudh. He was notorious for his rigid strictness in exacting his dues, and is supposed to have in his possession at least half a crore."—*Voyages and Travels by George Viscount Valentia, pages 136 and 141, Volume I.*

ous towards the Begums than he would otherwise have been. But of their guilt he was thoroughly convinced. And if the evidence of some actors in these events, and of many who must have known about them at first-hand, is to outweigh the presumptions and diatribes of his enemies, he had solid foundation for his belief.

In order to recover the treasure the Nawab and his Ministers had to adopt severe measures towards the two eunuchs who had the chief influence over the Begums. The cruelty practised by the Nawab and his servants has been greatly exaggerated, but it was sufficient to have justified the interference of the Resident. To have countenanced it by transmitting the orders of the Vizier was a grave offence. But for what took place Hastings at Calcutta cannot be held responsible. He ordered the Resident not to permit any negotiation or forbearance, but there is a wide gulf between legitimate severity and cruelty.

CHAPTER VI.

TREATY WITH SINDIA AND THE RAJA OF BERAR. THE WAR IN MADRAS.

At Chunar, surrounded by armed rebels and almost in their hands, Hastings with calm self-possession arranged and negotiated treaties with Sindia and the Raja of Berar. On the 29th of October 1781 he wrote to the Council:—"I lose not an instant in transmitting to you a copy of a letter which I have received from Colonel Muir, conveying to me the agreeable account of his having concluded a peace with Mahadajee Sindia, and in congratulating you most heartily on this happy event."* Soon afterwards he transmitted to them copies of his instructions to Mr. Anderson, our envoy at the court of Sindia. He desired Mr. Anderson to "obtain through the mediation of Sindia a treaty of peace and alliance, offensive and defensive, with the Peshwa, against all common enemies, but especially against Hyder Ali Khan, or of peace simply on the condition of restoring all that we have acquired during the war except Ahmedabad, and the territory conquered for Futty Sing Gaekwar." To bring the war with the Mahrattas to a close, Hastings was willing to sacrifice every foot of ground gained from them for ourselves

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 12th November 1781, Vol. III, page 813.

not excepting Bassein. "Reserve Bassein if you can. But do not insist on the reservation of Bassein to the hindrance of peace." He was not willing, however, to purchase peace at the price of honour. "You may consent to yield what is ours," he wrote, "and what we can in honour grant, but we will never suffer our treaties to be infringed, nor our faith to be violated."* Sindia could not get the Peshwa to agree to an offensive and defensive alliance. The object of the great Mahratta Minister Nana Fadnavis was by promising in turn each of the combatants his support to gain from the English Salsette, and from Hyder the territories south of the Nerbudda. The operations against Hyder Ali had, owing to the incapacity of the Madras Government, not been so successful as to inspire the Mahrattas with a belief in our ultimate success.

When the news reached the Council of the perils and misfortunes which beset Madras, Hastings implored Sir Eyre Coote,† who was Commander-in-Chief in India and a member of the Supreme Council, "to

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 10th December 1781, Vol. III, page 823.

† Eyre Coote was, at the special request of George III, invested by the Nawab of Arcot with the Order of the Bath. George III wrote from Weymouth to the Nawab as follows: "Having thought proper to bestow a high mark of Our approbation on two of Our subjects, whose conduct We hope will have rendered them worthy of your esteem, We cannot add to the dignity of conferring those honours on them more than by desiring you will represent Our person upon this solemn occasion, and that you will perform those functions for Us which We always perform ourselves when the circumstances will

stand forth and vindicate in his own person the rights and honours of the British arms."* The gallant General was stricken in years and suffering from bad health, but he obeyed the summons to the scene of his early glory. He arrived at Madras on the 5th of November, accompanied by a small European force. On the 10th he wrote to the Board, announcing to them that the painful intelligence of the fall of Arcot had been confirmed by the arrival of the officers and soldiers who had capitulated. "The accounts they give of the strength, good order, bravery, and activity of Hyder's army are truly alarming. His approaches at the siege were carried on with all that regularity as if superintended by the most skillful engineers, and his artillery at the same time is numerous and so well served as repeatedly to have dismounted our guns on the batteries."† Sir Eyre

admit. Our intention being to confer the Order of the Bath, one of Our most honourable marks of distinction, on Our trusty and well-beloved Sir John Lindsay, Knight, Commander-in-Chief of Our ships and vessels in the East Indies, and of the marine force of Our United Company of Merchants trading to and in those parts, and on Our trusty and well-beloved Eyre Coote, Esq. Major-General of Our forces in the East Indies and Commander-in-Chief of all the said Company's military force there, We have directed the said Sir John Lindsay to deliver to you this letter, with the Ensigns of the Order, and to learn from you the time when it may be most agreeable to you to perform this ceremony, as well as to make known to you the nature and manner of bestowing these honours upon him and the said Eyre Coote, and so repeating Our wishes for your felicity, We bid you heartily farewell."—*Secret Select Committee's Proc., 2nd October 1775, Vol. II, page 437.*

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 25th September 1780, Vol. II, page 719.

† Ditto Ditto 14th December 1780, Vol. III, page 747.

Coote was furnished with orders for the suspension of Mr. Whitehill, the Governor of Madras, which he executed with considerable tact. Mr. Smith, the senior member of Council, succeeded to the Government of Fort St. George, and the new administration invested Sir Eyre Coote with the sole direction of the war. His force however was neither sufficient nor in so prepared a state as to be equal to the undertaking of attacking Hyder in the very formidable forts which he occupied. The field artillery requisite for the service was not in readiness. The draft cattle, besides being deficient in numbers, were too weak to drag the guns. Provisions could not be had five miles beyond Madras.* It was not till the 1st of January that Eyre Coote was able to take the field, and on the 21st he wrote to the Government of Madras announcing that "to the utter honour of the officers and men composing this detachment, the Fort of Carangoly was taken and in a manner which redounds much to the credit of their bravery." † He added—

"After congratulating you on this fortunate event, I must indulge myself with reciting to you the particulars as well, because I know it will prove acceptable to you to read, as that it is a justice I owe, on every account,

* Letter from Sir Eyre Coote, 20th November 1780, Secret Select Committee's Proc., 18th December 1780, Vol. II, page 750.

† Secret Select Committee's Proc., 23rd February 1781, Vol. III, page 753.

to the officers and men of the detachment, whose gallant conduct is highly deserving a place upon record. The detachment arrived at the barrier gate of the Pettah this morning at half-past 5 o'clock, when they were challenged by two sentries who discharged their pieces and retired. In two or three minutes the gate was forced, and our troops immediately proceeded to the gates of the fort with a 12-pounder dragged by lascars, before them. Captain Davis sent two or three of the village people to the crest of the glacis with an offer of cowl to the garrison if they surrendered. In the meantime he was advancing towards the gateway. When the 12-pounder had got as far as the outer barrier the whole garrison appeared drawn up on the ramparts and traverses of the gates. They then began to fire, and the gun was with much difficulty run against the gate which, on the second shot, gave way so much as to admit the men one by one; a second gate which had been lately hung, was in about a quarter of an hour opened. A third gate also now presented itself, when the gun was brought up to, with much labour on removing the first gate out of its way at the first discharge; this also was burst open, when the troops entered and took possession, whilst the *bulk* of the besieged made their escape by ladders on the opposite side. During the whole of this transaction the detachment were exposed to a constant fire of musketry from the ramparts and upper work of the fort." *

Hyder was at this time engaged in the investment of five different fortresses commanded by English officers

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 23rd February 1781, Vol. III. page 758.

Ambur, Vellore, Wandewash, Permacoil, and Chingleput. The first of these had unfortunately been forced to surrender before Eyre Coote took the field. After relieving Chingleput and capturing Carangoly, the Commander-in-Chief marched to Wandewash, which he reached on the 24th "and had the satisfaction to find that the enemy had raised the siege two days before."* From Wandewash he proceeded towards Permacoil, the siege of which the enemy on hearing of his approach had also raised. He had however marched only three miles when he received letters informing him that the French fleet, consisting of seven ships of the line and three frigates, had appeared off Madras. "As I had every reason to apprehend they must have brought troops, and that they would land them and would, with the forces of Hyder, have laid siege to Madras, the security of which being the grand national object, I resolved to move towards its protection."† On further intelligence that the French fleet had sailed to Pondicherry, Eyre Coote resolved at all risks to move there, and within a few days his army was encamped on the Red Hills of Pondicherry with its front towards Arcot. Up to this time he had not been able to obtain any

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 27th April 1781, Vol. III, page 766.

† Ditto Ditto 27th April 1781 Vol. III, page 763.

certain information whether there was any considerable force in Pondicherry, and he resolved to send a party to bring him intelligence. He accordingly despatched a detachment of cavalry which returned and informed him that there did not appear to be any force in the town. The next day he sent a detachment, who destroyed the boats that supplied the French fleet with provisions and water, and spiked the guns. But not a grain of rice nor any other article of provision for the army could be procured. "In the hope," writes Eyre Coote, "that by my personal presence something effectual might be done towards obtaining supplies, I set out for Pondicherry the 7th, about 8 A.M., on horseback, and I had but just entered the bound hedge when I received a note express from camp informing me that Hyder with his whole army was in sight; instantly upon the receipt of this intelligence I sent orders to the detachment in Pondicherry to join the army, main body, with all expedition and returned myself to camp."*

Eyre Coote, perceiving that Hyder was moving in great force to the southward with the intention, no doubt, of attacking Cuddalore, immediately struck his camp, and marched to its relief. The army of Hyder quickly followed and

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 27th April 1781, Vol. III, page 763.

having overtaken the English force, opened a heavy cannonade. "As their cannon injured us so little, and as my object was to reach Cuddalore before them, I did not allow it much to impede my march, and what few shots we fired, by the accounts of deserters, killed and wounded many more than we lost, which, considering that they cannonaded us about three hours, were very few indeed. The quantity of ammunition which they expended that night must have been very considerable; they threw rockets at every part of the line until we entered the the bound hedge of this place."* Arrived at Cuddalore, Coote found his situation critical in the extreme, for there was only rice enough for one day's subsistence for the fighting men of the army. "The alarming prospect which this presented me with produced feelings which are much easier to be imagined than described. I saw in the fall of this handful of men the destruction of the English interest in India. * * * * What to determine in a situation so critical, so difficult, and in its consequences so important, I confess, was a question which I dreaded the decision of."* He resolved to offer them battle. Leaving his camp and followers under the walls of the

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 27th April 1781, Vol. III, page 764.

fort he drew up his army in a wide plain. But the enemy refused the challenge, and all attempts to draw them to an action having proved fruitless, on the fourth day Eyre Coote returned to his encampment. His anxiety was relieved by seeing on the afternoon of the same day the French fleet set sail and steer a course to clear the Bay. On the 17th he had the satisfaction of watching the rice vessels from Madras come to an anchor. He writes:—

"By this time the inhabitants of the town were next to starving, some absolutely had died for want, and two days more would have completed the melancholy scene, as the troops also must then have been without a grain to eat. I had by the aid of Mr. Daniel made a small provision to have enabled me to act in this last extremity, and which was about three days' rice I had with inconceivable labour got together. And with which at a hazard dictated by a regard for the public, an unwillingness to subject the credit of the British arms to a disgrace which from their situation appeared to be inevitable, and a desire, if possible, to extricate our affairs from the distress in which they are involved, I determined to force my way at all risks into the Tanjore country, as the only place with three days' provisions I had the least chance of attaining and subsisting the army in. The same motives which dictated this daring undertaking—now our distress for provisions are greatly removed—induce me to continue in my station here, until I can reinforce the army by drafts from the southward, for which purpose I have sent some vessels to Nagore to receive on board as many sepoys from the Tanjore corps as can be embarked and landed here. The situation of the enemy's army rendering it altogether im-

practicable to bring them by land, at any rate too dangerous for me in prudence to think of it. My army, originally small, stands greatly in need of an augmentation, having been considerably weakened by the respectable garrison left in Carangoly, and by deaths, desertions, and the other casualties incident to the military service."*

For the next four months the English army remained stationary, owing to the want of provisions and the necessary equipment. On the 14th of June a small reinforcement of troops from Bombay reached Eyre Coote, and on the 18th, with four battalions of sepoys and eight pieces of ordnance under his immediate direction, he attacked the fortified temple of Chillumbrum. The assault was vigorous, but the sepoys were beaten back with serious loss. The next morning Eyre Coote intended to renew the attack with his scan y Europeans, but hearing how strongly the enemy were fortified he withdrew his force and, after five days' marc hing, encamped at the village of Porto Novo situated on the river Vellaar close to the sea. On the 24th Admiral Sir Edward Hughes arrived from Madras and was visited by the General. It was resolved by them that the united efforts of the fleet and the army should be directed to the speedy capture of Chillumbrum, and orders were issued for landing the battering train. But no sooner had Eyre Coote returned to camp than

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 27th April 1781, Vol. III, page 765; History of Mysore, by Colonel Wilks, Vol. I, page 476.

tidings reached him of the presence of Hyder's whole army within a distance of a few miles. "The grounds they occupied, naturally strong and commanding, were rendered much more formidable by most of the spots that would admit of it to advantage being strengthened with front and flanking batteries erected with judgment and despatch by Hyder Ally's corps appropriated for such services. Large bodies of cavalry, who had from our arrival at Porto Novo hovered round our camp, rendered it impracticable for even a single harcarrah to return with any intelligence to be depended on of either the strength or position of the enemy's batteries. Our grand guard and other outposts were absolutely the boundary and united extent of our knowledge respecting the enemy."*

The English General had then to choose between a march to seek a battle, and to remain dependent for his supplies on the sea. He called a council of war. It was determined to abandon the preparations for a siege, to embark the battering guns, and with four days' rice on the soldiers' backs to strike for victory. The ships were to keep near the coast to embark the troops in case of disaster. At daybreak, on the 1st of July, the English troops were in motion and soon

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 7th September 1781, Vol. III, page 790.

reached an open plain. Finding it covered with the cavalry of the enemy they formed in two lines and proceeded in order of battle. They had not advanced above a mile when the enemy's batteries were discovered lying exactly on the road of march. Then Eyre Coote, whose coolness never failed him and whose military judgment seldom was at fault, haulted the army for near an hour to survey the situation. "It was necessary," he wrote, "to explore, if possible, the ground on our right, in hopes of its admitting to advance from that point, by which we should avoid the enemy's direct fire from their batteries, and have a chance by gaining the left of their posts to turn or other ways command them. The principal force of their army was drawn up in the rear of their works, extending further on the plain than either eye or horizon could command, with large bodies of cavalry in every direction, and their rockets were thrown in numbers to impede and harass our movements. During this interval of unavoidable inaction, thoroughly to examine their position, we were obliged to suffer a warm cannonade. Their guns were well served and did execution; we could not afford to throw away any shot to answer them, having occasion for every round we had for more decisive service." *

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 7th September 1781, Vol. III, page 791.

After mature deliberation Sir Eyre Coote determined to move to the right to the eastward of a range of sandhills which followed the direction of the coast at the distance of eleven hundred yards from the sea. After moving in that direction for some little distance an opening in the range was discovered through which a practicable road had been made by Hyder "for the purpose of drawing his guns to a large redoubt about half a mile from the sea. The work was "far advanced, and required but another day to complete it;* through it we proceeded towards the field; his guns which were under cover, and his artillery uncovered in line, galled us considerably as we advanced, but a quick and forward movement seemed absolutely necessary."† After the pass had been forced the General again developed his troops in order of battle. "The minute was critical. I had gained the flank of the enemy's batteries, waited with im-

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 7th September 1781, Vol. III, page 791.

"I determined on the movement to the right and proceeded about 9 o'clock, the two lines marching parallel to one another in that direction; consequently it only required their facing to the front to re-assume at any time their original order. Two battalions with eight pieces were ordered to form a third force, the flanks of this corps joining both lines on the left to keep some batteries in check from that quarter, which opened while we were performing the above movement."—*Letter from Eyre Coote, 6th July 1781, Secret Select Committee's Proc., 7th September 1781, Vol. III, page 791.*

† Secret Select Committee's Proc,. 7th September 1781, Vol. III, page 789.

patience under a heavy fire of cannon till I had ascertained that the heights in my rear were possessed by the second line, then instantly moved on with the first as far as order and an advancing fire of artillery on our side would permit."* The enemy's batteries quickly retired to their lines. Here the conflict was maintained for many hours with singular obstinacy. "The bravery of our troops at length carried the point, and the first line forced the enemy's infantry, artillery, and their cavalry to give way, obliging them to seek for safety by a retreat."† To the gallantry of our native troops the General paid a handsome tribute. "The spirited behaviour," he wrote, "of our sepoy troops did them the greatest credit, no Europeans could be steadier; they were emulous of being foremost on every service it was necessary to undertake."‡

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 7th September 1781, Vol. III, page 791.

Mill, with his desire to disparage his countrymen which amounted to a disease, writes – "A panic ensued, during which the General seemed irresolute, and some officers counselled a retreat." Munro, who was present, writes—The "General rode along the front (of the first line), encouraging every one to patience, and to reserve their fire till they were ordered to part with it; he only waited for accounts from the second line. An aide-de-camp from General Stuart told him that he had taken possession of the sandhills; he immediately gave orders to advance, and to open all the guns. The fire was so heavy that nothing could stand before it."—*Life of Munro, page 43.*

† Secret Select Committee's Proc., 7th September 1781, Vol. III, page 792.

‡ Ditto ditto, 7th September 1781, Vol. III, page 793.

The advantage of halting till the second line had taken up their position on the sandhill was made manifest during the engagement. Eyre Coote writes:—"The second line obstinately disputed and with success an attack meditated on my rear by many battalions of infantry with their guns and a very large body of cavalry. The different efforts made to force and charge the rear corps of the second line were all repulsed, the heights disputed carried and kept possession of, by which the advancing corps were left at liberty to push the enemy in front advantageously. The possessing the heights also prevented their proceeding towards the sea to attempt our baggage; it was from thence covered in perfect security and unmolested."* Owing to the want of cavalry the English were unable to take complete advantage of the victory, but as Eyre Coote remarked:—

"Considering the trying situation this army is in, destitute of most of the common resources for carrying on service; weak draft and hardly any carriage cattle (our guns in the face of the enemy's heaviest fire were through deep sand obliged to be drawn a full mile by the soldiers); no provisions but from day to day; pay considerably in arrears; the principal part of the Carnatic and its capital in the possession of the enemy; our armies in different parts of India having also unfortunately received checks; an enemy in great force to

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 7th September 1781, Vol. III, page 792.

deal with, whose rapid success has strengthened his cause with the natives to an alarming degree; no proper force of cavalry on our side, and not half carriage sufficient for our wounded and sick. These things considered, I think I may venture to say that fairly to beat Hyder on his chosen fortified ground was as much as could be expected."*

The consequences of the victory proved highly important. Hyder abandoned his design on the southern provinces: Tippoo raised the siege of Wandewash; and both retired with the whole of their army to the neighbourhood of Arcot. The Bengal brigade under the skilful guidance of Colonel Pearse was marching along the coast and shortly after the battle of Porto Novo it reached Pulicat, an inlet of the sea, distant about thirty miles from Madras. Hyder detached Tippoo to intercept him, but Eyre Coote, with a wretched equipment and a small force daily diminishing from sickness, marched one hundred and fifty miles and formed a junction with the relieving force. The reinforcement added greatly to his numerical strength, but it was not accompanied by the number of draught oxen requisite to drag the guns and convey the provisions. For want of transport, he therefore could not attempt the two main objects of the campaign—the relief of Vellore and the siege of Arcot.

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 7th September 1781, Vol. III, page 793.

Hyder had now marched the whole of his army to oppose his return and taken up his position on the field where exactly a twelvemonth before he had defeated Baillie's detachment. The astrologers assured him it was a lucky spot and a lucky day. On the 26th of August, with rice sufficient for a few days carried on the backs of the men, Eyre Coote marched once more to fight Hyder on the ground selected by himself. The result of the battle was doubtful, and both parties claimed the victory by firing a salute. The next month, however, Eyre Coote again engaged Hyder at Solinghur and totally defeated him. After relieving Vellore, the English army was compelled, from the bursting of the monsoon and want of food, to enter into cantonments near Madras. Thus closed a campaign signalised by many combats won by a handful of veterans, whose courage responding to their General's genius had baffled all the plans of Hyder.

Months of toil and combat had completely shattered the health of Eyre Coote. He wrote to the Board: "With respect to myself, my state of health is so bad that for these sixteen days past I have been in a manner confined to my bed, and such is the nature of my indisposition, and so much is my constitution impaired by the fatigues and anxieties which I have undergone in one of the severest campaigns I have ever served, now about thirteen months, that I have little hopes

given me of recovery but by a retirement from business. It is my intention, therefore, to embrace the first favourable opportunity of returning to Bengal for the re-establishment of my health."* The grave tidings that reached him from Vellore however led him to abandon his intention and to incur all risks to relieve it. On the 2nd of January he placed himself at the head of the army; on the 5th he was found senseless in his tent, smitten by a stroke of apoplexy. "For nearly two hours, during which little hope was entertained of his recovery, the despondency painted on every countenance, and particularly on those of the native troops, whose attachment and confidence exceeded the bounds of human veneration, and who could with difficulty be restrained from transgressing the limits of decorum to satisfy their anxiety, presented altogether a scene of mournful interests. Expresses to Madras excited a corresponding degree of apprehension: an earnest entreaty from the Government urged his immediate return, 'for the preservation of a life so valuable to the State,' and Colonel Lang was ordered to take eventual charge of the army. While the Government waited with impatience for the return of the General, intelligence was brought that he had marched on the next morning for the relief of Vellore, so far

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 2nd January 1782, Vol. III, page 828.

recovered as to admit of his being carried in a palanquin."*

Nothing of importance occurred till the 9th, when the army of Hyder appeared in great force posted on the other side of the river Poonyr. On Coote crossing the stream the enemy struck their camp and marched away, but next day they appeared again just as the convoy was passing a swamp which had to be crossed. "The attacking our "baggage and convoy for Vellore was apparently their grand object, and the guarding this, not to be repaired, often required the utmost circumspection. They made their attack supported by a number of heavy guns cannonading at a great distance; just at this time the first line had crossed a deep morass which impeded both our train, rice carts, and bullocks very much. The different brigades were immediately ordered to be posted so as to keep the enemy in check on all sides while our convoy passed the bad ground. The whole got over safe and was secured at the head of our lines."† That evening the English army halted four miles off Vellore and the next morning encamped beneath its walls. "The provisions and stores to be deposited in the garrison will be lodged there this afternoon, and

* Wilks' History of Mysore, Volume I, page 503.

† Secret Select Committee's Proc., 25th February 1782, Vol. III, page 839.

as the object of our march is not happily completed, I shall set off on my return to-morrow morning. The spirit of the troops in this service does them the greatest honour. This is the day the commanding officer of Vellore acquainted both Government and me that it was absolutely necessary to be relieved, that he could not hold out an hour longer."* Having relieved the garrison, Eyre Coote began his return march to Madras. When he reached the morass he again found Hyder in full force prepared to dispute his passage. He tried "by a quick movement, as his heavy and numerous train of artillery would permit, to get near enough our rear corps, cannonade them advantageously before they were clear of the bad ground, and also to annoy our last line while they were posted to cover the rear. His 24- and 18-pounders, commanding a much more considerable distance than our light 6's and 12's, gives him an opportunity of attempting these distant cannonades with an idea of some success, and Hyder always takes care to be certain that there is impeding or impassable ground between his army and ours; thus he is always sure of its being optional with him to draw off his guns in safety before our army can act offensively to advantage. Our troops sustained a heavy cannonade for three hours, happily with little loss. The instant the rear and bag-

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 25th February 1782, Vol. III, page 839.

gage had crossed the morass, I posted my baggage and stores close to an adjoining hill, leaving for their protection a strong corps with fourteen 6- and 3-pounders, and pushed on the army over high ground by the nearest possible route for the enemy's main body and guns. I moved off from the left lines, in column first, and, as the ground opened sufficiently for forming, marched on in line of battle. This was about four in the afternoon. As soon as our army was near enough to do execution, we opened an advancing fire of artillery from all parts, and had the mortification to see the enemy precipitately draw off. I term it a mortification, for, if Hyder would have stood and risked the chance of war for one hour, his army would, in all probability, have been destroyed, such is the ardour and power of the handful of veterans I have the honour of commanding, but truly distressing our situation for the want of proper magazines, means of field subsistence and carriage for it." *

Three days afterwards Hyder again appeared in full force with an apparent intention of offering battle. The invitation was not declined, but after many hours spent in manœuvres intended to force an engagement the English army continued its march. On reaching Fort St. George Eyre Coote complained bitterly of

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 25th February 1782, Vol. III, page 841.

the negligence of the Madras Government in not furnishing him with supplies and transport. He wrote—"I can have no dependence on the armies being found in such a manner as to enable me to conduct it to such operations as would produce the most permanent advantages and do that justice which my zeal for the interests of the Company and honour of the British arms prompts me to. I must resign the task and leave it to the execution of some one whose health and abilities may be better calculated to surmount those difficulties which I can no longer, in a due regard to the cause of the public and my honour and reputation as a soldier, pretend to contend against." *

In October 1781 the President of Fort Marlborough addressed a letter to Lord Macartney congratulating him on his accession to the Government of Madras and suggesting the capture of the Dutch settlements. He wrote—"The invasion of the Carnatic by Hyder I fear has prevented a total conquest of Dutch India. Their settlements, my Lord, would have been as easily wrested from them as the Portuguese were formerly by this nation. Their forts to the eastward generally consist of a square with four bastions, without any modern works. Their garrisons chiefly of a motley

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 25th February 1782, Vol. III, page 842.

tribe, without discipline, without clothing, and very little pay. Their officers without practice, generally the scum of the people, exceedingly ignorant, and dead to every feeling excepting to that of smoking and sophi drinking, and so great is the economy of their Government that scarce a garrison has a corps of more than five or six officers—many two. I confine this account to the eastern settlements. Two ships of the line with two frigates and 500 land forces would have commanded terms to any garrison, excepting Batavia. Their government is everywhere abhorred by the country people, and I am persuaded the appearance of ships alone, at some settlements, would occasion a revolt. My Lord, a detachment of such a squadron during the height of the monsoon would answer two purposes, not only distressing the enemy, but recruiting your own strength, for, as Dutch soldiers consist generally of Germans, they would all enlist under your colours, and I am persuaded if Sir Edward Hughes would send this small squadron to Batavia roads, he would soon man his fleet."* Lord Macartney, contrary to the advice of Sir Eyre Coote, adopted the suggestion of his correspondent and equipped an expedition from Tanjore and Madras which was commanded by Sir Hector Munro. Negapatam, the principal

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 25th February 1782, Vol. III, page 843.

settlement of the Dutch on the Coromandal Coast, was captured in November, and two months after Trincomalee, the finest harbour in Ceylon, was also taken from them.

The day that Admiral Hughes anchored at Madras after the capture of Trincomalee, a French fleet, consisting of twelve ships of the line and eighteen others under the command of Admiral Suffrein, reached the coast. On the 15th they came in sight of Madras. The English fleet had consisted of six ships of the line, but the day after its return it had been fortunately reinforced by three ships from England. The French Admiral hoped to destroy the English squadron in the roads of Fort St. George, but finding it more numerous than he expected, he "hauled away to the southward." * The English fleet in spite of the disparity in numbers followed without hesitation. The day was spent in an exciting chase after the transports. The next morning the English Admiral made the signal to form in line of battle. But it was late in the afternoon before "the action became general from our centre to our rear, the commanding ship of the enemy with three others of their second line leading down on our centre, yet never at any time during the action advancing further than opposite to the *Superb's* (our centre ship) ches-

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 1st April 1782, Vol. III, page 851.

tree and beam, and we having little or no wind and some heavy rain during that time." *

"Under these circumstances the enemy brought eight of their best ships to the attack of five of ours as the van of our line, consisting of the *Monmouth*, *Eagle*, *Burford*, and *Worcester*, could not be brought into action without tacking on the enemy; and although the signal for that purpose was at the masthead ready for hoisting, there was neither wind sufficient to enable them to tack, nor for the five ships then engaged with the enemy, hard pressed, and much disabled in their sails and rigging, to follow them, without an almost certainty of separating our van from our rear. At six in the afternoon a squall of wind from the south-east took our ships and paid them round head on to the enemy to the north-eastward, when the engagement was renewed with great spirit and alacrity from our starboard guns, and at twenty-five minutes past six the enemy hauled on their wind to the north-east and ceased firing." *

The anxiety of the Board was greatly relieved by receipt of the Admiral's despatch, "and deeming the advantages gained by our ships in taking the *Lauriston* and rescuing a number of prizes captured by the enemy, and in silencing their fire after an action of

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 1st April 1782, Vol. III, page 852.

two hours and a half under a great disparity of numbers as equal to a victory, ordered that a general discharge of the artillery in the garrison of Fort William be made to-morrow morning in commemoration of this event."* The Council also wrote a letter of the warmest congratulations to Sir Edward Hughes. They stated—"In a word, we regard your action with the French fleet as the crisis of our fate in the Carnatic, and in the result of it we see that province relieved and preserved, and the permanency of the British power in India firmly established. For such important services to the nation and to the Company we, as their representatives, offer you our warmest acknowledgments and our sincerest congratulations on your success, and the glory you have acquired in obtaining it."†

The roar of the cannon proclaiming the naval victory had scarcely ceased when evil tidings reached the Board from Madras. Colonel Braithwaite, who, after the capture of Negapatam, was protecting with a small detachment, chiefly consisting of sepoys, the territory of Tanjore, allowed himself to be surrounded by the army of Tippoo. For twenty-eight hours the scanty force successfully sustained a desperate conflict. Then the charge of Lally and his four hundred

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 1st April 1782, Vol. III, page 853.

† Ditto ditto ditto, Vol. III, page 854.

Europeans threw the sepoys into confusion and the little army was compelled to surrender.* The troops of Tippoo were reinforced by the arrival of two thousand Frenchmen; and Cuddalore, whose whole garrison consisted only of fourteen hundred sepoys and five artillerymen, was forced to capitulate. The loss was serious because it afforded a convenient station, both naval and military, to the French. On the 10th of April the English army once again took the field. Its veteran Chief wrote to the Government at Madras—"My Lord and gentlemen,—I have a weight upon my shoulders that almost bears me down. Worn out in constitution, I feel myself unequal to the constant fatigues and anxieties attending my situation. I shall, however, endeavour as far as lays in my power to stem the torrent that seems almost ready to overwhelm us, not doubting of your exertions to assist my labours."† On the 24th his army reached Wandewash, where, twenty-six years before, the old warrior had defeated Lally. But Hyder refused to fight him on the old battle ground, and Eyre Coote marching in the direction of Pondicherry, found Hyder and his French auxiliaries strongly posted in

* An account of what took place gathered from sepoys and others who escaped is given in the Secret Select Committee's Proceedings of the 22nd April 1782, Vol. III, page 855.

† Secret Select Committee's Proc., 29th April 1782, Vol. III, page 864.

the neighbourhood of Kellinoor. To attack the enemy on his chosen and fortified ground would have been a rash act, and the English General wisely determined to attempt a movement which should draw them from their position and compel them to fight on more equal terms. He therefore, on the 30th of May, marched against Arni, Hyder's great magazine, feeling certain that this would draw him from his strong position. The result verified the correctness of his conception. Early in the morning on the 2nd of June, just as the English army were about to encamp near the fort, the roar of cannon upon the rear informed the General of the presence of the enemy. His baggage was in a hollow with commanding ground all round. Soon a heavy fire opened upon him from every quarter in front. After extricating the baggage with some difficulty, and placing it well protected on the banks of a tank, Eyre Coote ordered the army to advance in two lines towards that part of the rising ground upon which the enemy appeared in greatest force. But tidings, that the main body of the enemy was inclining to the right to attack his rear, compelled Eyre Coote to alter his original disposition. The manœuvre having been executed with the greatest celerity and correctness, the English army again advanced. The enemy no sooner observed it in motion towards them than they retreated. After advancing a couple of miles

and having taken possession of the heights originally occupied by the enemy, the English General halted the troops in order that the baggage should be brought up under cover of the line. When this had been accomplished after an hour's halt, the English again advanced, and the enemy retreated in confusion. About sunset our troops came upon a part of the rear, superintending the crossing of some of their guns in the bed of a river.

"I ordered," wrote Eyre Coote, "a fire to be opened upon them. Upon observing more attentively it was perceived that they had halted to cover the crossing of some of their guns or tumbrels then in the bed of the river. Being at this time advanced considerably beyond the ground of encampment we had left in the morning, I sent orders for the baggage to assemble at a place contiguous thereto which had been reconnoitred for it the preceding day, and for the cavalry, as soon as they could be dispensed with, to join me. In the interim I ordered the grenadiers of the 73rd, under the Hon'ble Captain Lindsay, supported by the other European corps and a Bengal regiment of sepoys under Major Blaine, to push across the river and to drive the enemy from the opposite banks, which was performed with great alacrity and spirit by the whole of the corps and with the most exemplary ardour by the grenadiers of the 73rd who led the attack, and who received a scattered fire of musketry from the enemy as they approached. They gave way on all sides and left us in possession of one gun, a long brass 6-pounder, five tumbrels full of ammunition, and two carts of shot. The corps continued the pursuit with great eagerness until they had gone

upwards of a mile beyond the river, but could not come up with the enemy. However, they pressed them so close that it is out of doubt could even half our small body of cavalry been employed that day with the line, or had it been possible for them after receipt of my orders to have joined me in time, not only more guns would have been taken but the whole or greatest part of Lally's corps have fallen into our hands. When the cavalry did join, the enemy had so dispersed and got to so great a distance, that no attempt could be made upon them with the smallest prospect of success." *

Want of cavalry and want of provisions prevented the English Commander from taking the greatest advantage of his victory. He wrote—"It has been my misfortune ever since I took the field, on the event of every success, to have cause to lament my inability to pursue the advantages open from victory for want of a sufficiency of provisions. On the present occasion, had I possessed the means of subsistence, I could not only have driven Hyder up the Ghauts, but most probably have got hold of his grand magazine of Arni which would most assuredly have so far ended the war as to have checked his immediately returning in force to the Carnatic, whilst it would have given to this army that very support which at this moment maintains his."†

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 4th July 1782, Vol. III, page 872.
† Ditto ditto ditto, page 873.

The same express which brought the Board news of Eyre Coote's successful action near Arni, also brought a despatch from the Admiral containing a graphic account of a hard fought action with the French fleet. After the first engagement the English fleet had returned to Madras at the beginning of March. Towards the end of that month the French Admiral left Porto Novo to attack a fleet of English Indiamen which had appeared on the coast. Sir Edward Hughes on hearing of this movement immediately got underweigh, and the day after leaving Madras "fell in with His Majesty's ships *Sultan* and *Magnanime* and their convoy of seven of the Company's outward bound ships, and a French prize. The convoy I immediately despatched to Madras roads, and took with me the *Sultan* and *Magnanime*, steering a direct course for Trincomalee, in order to land the military stores and reinforcement of troops for that garrison, determined not to seek the enemy's squadron till that service was first performed, nor to shun them if they fell in my way."*

On the 8th April, the English Admiral discovered the enemy's squadron consisting of eighteen sail, but as his first object was to relieve Trincomalee, he held on his course, and the French followed. On the 11th

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 23rd May 1782, Vol. III, page 864.

Sir Edward Hughes made the island of Ceylon about fifteen miles to the southward of Trincomalee, and bore away for that place.

"On the 12th at daybreak, having altered the position of the enemy's squadron and given them the wind by bearing away, I saw them crowding all the sail they could after us, and their coppered-bottom ships coming fast up with our rear, on which I immediately determined to engage them. At 9 in the forenoon I made the signal for the line of battle ahead on the starboard tack at two cables' length distance, the enemy's squadron then bearing north by east, distant about 6 miles, and the wind at north by east, they continued manœuvring their ships and changing their position in their line till 15 minutes past noon, when they bore down to engage His Majesty's squadron; one sail of them, stretching along to engage our ships in the van, and the other seven sails steering directly on our centre, the *Superb*, with the *Monmouth* her second ahead, and the *Monarca* her second astern; at half past 1 the engagement began in the van of both squadrons, and at three minutes after, I made the signal for a general engagement; the French Admiral and his second stern bore down on the *Superb* within pistol shot, where he continued giving and receiving a severe fire for nine minutes, and then stood on, greatly damaged, to attack the *Monmouth*, at that time engaged with another of the enemy's ships, and made room for the ships in his rear to draw up to the attack of our centre, where the engagement was warmest. At 3 the *Monmouth* lost her main and mizzen masts, and drew out of the line to leeward of our squadron. At 40 minutes past 3, being near the shore, I made the signal for the squadron to wear and haul their wind in a line of battle ahead on the larboard tack still

engaging the enemy. At 40 minutes past 5, being in shoal water and fearing the *Monmouth* might drift too near shore, I made the signal for the squadron to prepare to anchor and hauled down the signal for the line of battle. At 40 minutes past 6 the enemy's squadron in great disorder drew off to the eastward, and the engagement ceased, at which time I anchored with His Majesty's squadron in order to repair our damages, which on board the *Superb* and *Monmouth* were very great indeed, both in their hulls, masts, sails, and rigging, nor had any one ship of the squadron escaped without great injury in her hull and masts, and all were much torn in their sails and rigging." *

For seven days the two fleets lay within shot of each other too disabled to fight or to sail. Then the English squadron returned to Trincomalee and the French to a Dutch port. After having "refitted the several ships of the squadron, and taken on board such of our recovered men as could be serviceable, the English fleet returned, at the end of June, to Negapatam, to watch the enemy's squadron."† On the 5th of July the two fleets again came in sight, and another desperate contest took place. It ended in serious loss on both sides, but without the capture of any ships. The French were however compelled to abandon all idea of capturing Negapatam.

* Secrect Select Committee's Proc., 23rd May 1782, Vol. III, page 864.

† Ditto ditto 4th July 1782, Vol. III, page 876.

The Admiral in his letter announcing his engagement with the French fleet congratulated the Board "most sincerely on the peace concluded between the Company and the Mahrattas."* After long and intricate negotiations and a succession of disappointments, on the 17th of May the treaty of Salbai was concluded with Sindia. All territories conquered from the Peishwa, subsequent to the treaty of Purandhur, were to be restored; the Nizam and Hyder Ali were also to restore the territories they had taken from the English, and all Europeans, except the English and Portuguese, were to be excluded from the Mahratta dominions. Broach was given to Sindia for his humanity to the English after the convention of Wargaum, and he became guarantee for the due fulfilment of the treaty by the contracting parties. Eyre Coote on receiving intelligence of the treaty of Salbai wrote and informed Hyder what had taken place. The Mysore Chief replied with considerable sarcasm—"I have received your obliging letter wherein you observe that the news of the treaty of alliance and friendship which has taken place between the Peishwa and the English must have been known to me because my name is included therein, all of which I perfectly comprehend.

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 8th August 1782, Vol. III, page 870.

Without giving me notice, how is it possible that my name can be included?" * He requested that an envoy should be sent to him with a copy of the treaty and Eyre Coote acceded to his request. The account of the interview between Hyder Ali and the envoy is of considerable interest, and raises our opinion of the frankness and determination of the Mysore Chief. After stating that he had heard that the English General was a great and gallant commander and an excellent man, Hyder plunged at once into business. It was never any wish of his to quarrel with the English, but he had been driven to it by their want of faith. The envoy urged that he was the first to infringe the treaty, and Hyder replied:—

"I will tell you who it was that transgressed the treaty. In the first place it was stipulated that we should mutually assist each other, and they agreed to lend me troops. When, therefore, the Mahrattas had entered my country I wrote to them a variety of ways desiring them to send me succours. In reply they at first told me *they would send them, they would send them*, and after some time they said they had written to Europe and expected orders from thence. To this I urged that it would be a year and six months before their orders could be obtained from Europe and of what use would their succours be then? The Governor's answer was that without orders from Europe they could do nothing. And yet at length after a long time had elapsed they pretended that till

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 12th August 1782, Vol. III, page 881.

then they had received no directions. In this manner have they framed excuses to evade this article of the treaty. In the next place I told them not to go against Mahé; they said they would not, and yet they went. I knew not who they are that presume to enter and raise disturbances in my boundaries." *

The envoy attempted to justify the attack on Mahé on the ground that the English and French were at war, and that the Madras Government were acting under orders from home. In passing through Hyder's territory they did him no injury. Hyder replied :—

"In those seaports of mine that are large, the English, French, Dutch, Danes, and all the European nations have factories. If, then, the English factory should there be attacked by any of the rest, ought I to sit an unconcerned spectator? Surely not; but to proceed.—A third point is, that the people at Tellicherry are always supplying Nayem Ra with guns and ammunition and encouraging him by that means to wage war with me. What treaty can subsist when such unreasonable proceedings take place on our side? What friendship can ever be maintained between you and me? But, besides all this, every year or two a new Governor comes out and does whatever he takes it into his head to do without any regard to treaties or engagements, but only to what happens to strike him as advisable. In this case the Company I acknowledge is one Company, they are not divided, but while these people that come hither continue to pursue such measures, what dependence is there on a treaty? It was on these accounts that I took it into my head, that

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 26th August 1782, Vol. III, page 886.

though it should cost me crores of rupees, I would spend it in destroying and laying waste your country till never a lamp was left to burn there, and having formed this resolution I wrote to my vakeel that I should certainly come into the Carnatic. But though he went and reported this, it was neither believed nor attended to. An European vakeel, however, came from Madras, and presented me, as you do now, with a fine series of arguments, telling me "*that they and I ought to be friends*," and a great deal more to that effect. In answer to all which I told him immediately, in plain terms, that I positively would visit the Carnatic, and that on his way back to Madras he would see my cavalry and artillery in readiness. With this plain message I sent him back, and I have since kept my word. I have come, and for these two years have desolated your whole country and burnt all to ashes. In future, too, you will know what I can do, for what care I if it cost me ten crores of rupees more than I have spent already; you, indeed, will suffer, but to me it is a trifle, or nothing" *

The envoy asked what Hyder expected to gain if he spent another ten crores of rupees on the war. "Do you think the English will ever be crushed by you? Or the Carnatic become yours? Do you expect to see it even in a dream? No! be assured, this is a vain idea." Hyder replied—"What I had to do I have done. Madras only remains, and what great matter is that?"† He desired to know if the envoy had brought a copy of the treaty which he was told had

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 26th August 1782, Vol. III, page 887.
† Ditto ditto ditto page 881.

been concluded between the Poona Ministry and the English, and in which his name was included. The envoy remarked that the ship bringing a Persian copy had been captured, that those which had reached them were in English, and that they had not forwarded him a translation as it might prove inaccurate, but that he had furnished him with a verbal detail of the particulars of their treaty. Hyder retaliated with warmth—"I am not a boy that, after spending crores of rupees and undergoing the fatigue of two years' war, I should quit the Carnatic and set your people at liberty, merely on the strength of your information." He knew nothing of the treaty which had been signed, but before four months elapsed the English would know the value of a treaty with the Mahrattas. "Do you know," he asked, "what engagements the Poona Ministry have entered into with me?" I told him "No." "Hear then," said he, "I will tell you: I was to expunge the English name from the Carnatic, and they engaged to take charge of Bengal. This was what we agreed upon, and to this day the letters that come from there are to the same effect." * As to the material assistance that the Nizam and Mahrattas could afford the English he professed to attach no importance to it: He said "You will march four coss in a day, more you cannot for

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 26th August 1782, Vol. III, page 890.

your lives, and so keep trotting after me all round the country; my businesss in the meantime I shall take care to despatch. I shall lay all waste around you; this will be my employment, and then *you* do your best. Bring the Nizam and the Mahrattas to help you, and see what you can do. You were all three united for a time once before, and what did it end in? And what think you will it come to in future? Why, each will go back the same way he came." *

A second audience was held the next day, and for an hour and a half the English envoy reiterated his arguments as to the advantages which would accrue to Hyder from making peace. The Mysore Chief listened patiently and at the close of the discourse declared that it was his wish to settle the dispute and contract a hearty friendship with the English. "My friendship," he declared, "will not be like that of the Mahrattas and the Nizam. You have now, you say, secured that of the former, but take my word for it you will discover, in four or five months more, how far it is to be relied upon. When they have not observed one dot of the treaty they made with me, why should you imagine their attachment to you will be more durable? There is no occasion for *me*, however, to tell you this: you will be sufficiently apprised of it

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 26th August 1782, Vol. III, page 890.

when the time comes. A sight of the letters and papers that come constantly to me from thence, which you may see if you please, would alone convince you."* Hyder declared himself willing to make a treaty of peace, but he refused to close the war by merely agreeing to the Poona treaty. "I have not entered," he remarked, "the Carnatic and made war here for these two years past merely for the purpose of going out as I came, and if I chose to do so, there would surely be no need of waiting for your orders; rather than do that I will stay two years more. I care not for the expense, nor do I expect to get any money out of the Carnatic. That is no object with *me*, for when the English troops formerly entered my country, I did not scruple even then to burn and lay waste the whole territory in which they marched. But *you* are undone if your country is not in a condition to yield revenue; for what avails it that you possess a fort, like that of Vellore for instance, without being able to realize anything from its dependencies?" † He argued that as in the treaty with the Mahrattas and the Nizam the English had agreed to the surrender of territory, he had a right to expect the same terms. It was in vain that the envoy urged that it was to the Mahrattas only

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 26th August 1782, Vol. III, page 893.
† Ditto ditto ditto page 894.

the English had agreed to restore the country they had taken from them, and that they had not invaded nor destroyed any English possession. On this point Hyder remained firm and would listen to no overtures. Sindia had written to him as to his real intention with regard to the Poona treaty. "My answer to him is, that let that measure take place when it may, I am bent upon war." *

Eyre Coote finding that Hyder would not withdraw his demands, closed the negotiations, and with his troops returned to Madras. The time had come when he must leave the veterans he had so often led to victory. He had begun the campaign broken in health, and the toils and anxieties of war had quite undermined his constitution. The doctors informed him that his only hope of recovery was a sea voyage and change of air; and it was with no common pain that he obeyed their commands and set sail for Bengal.

He had not long left the scene of war when tidings reached the Board of the death of his great antagonist. Worn out by the fatigues of the campaign and suffering from a cancer, Hyder Ali expired in his eightieth year. A bitter and inveterate foe of England, he possessed some of those qualities which Eng-

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 26th August 1782, Vol. III, page 895.

lishmen admire. He had received from nature excellent parts, vast muscular strength, and unflinching courage. He was a bold and skilful horseman and no one outdid him as a marksman. His education had not been such as to develop his understanding. He could not read nor write any language, but he spoke Canarese, Mahratta, Telugu, and Tamil. He was his own prime minister, and in the business of the State was most assiduous. He had the talent of choosing his servants well, and treated them with generosity if they served his ambition, but with ruthless severity if they interfered with his glory. His temper was purely intellectual, and was affected neither by pity nor passion. No act was too base or cruel for him to commit in the pursuit of his aim, the prosperity and greatness of the empire which he founded. The rising power of the English threatened, he considered, its security; and he carried merciless devastation into their dominions. With singular pertinacity he warred against them for years, but at the close of life he felt he was engaged in a hopeless conflict. After his death his son Tippoo found in the folds of his father's turban a small scrap of paper on which were written the following words:—"I have gained nothing by the war with the English, but am now, alas! no longer alive. If you, through fear of disturbances in your own kingdom, repair thither, without having pre-

viously concluded peace with the English, they will certainly follow you and carry the war into your country. On this account, therefore, it is better first to make peace on whatever terms you can procure, and then go to your own country." *

Tippoo, however, did not he arken tothe advice of his father, and continued the war. It might have been brought to a close if the English had struck a decisive blow. But General Stuart, who succeeded to the command of the Madras Army, after the departure of Eyre Coote, wasted valuable time in altercation with the civil authority. With a better equipped army than Sir Eyre Coote ever commanded he allowed sixty days to pass without making any forward movement, and when he did move, his only action was to destroy the fortifications of three forts which Eyre Coote was most anxious to preserve. The Madras Government were not desirous to conduct the war to a successful issue, but were bent on making peace on any terms. They sent an envoy to negotiate with Tippoo, and requested from the Supreme Government full and special powers to conclude a peace with Tippoo. The request aroused the anger of Hastings. He wrote:—

"After having lost the most favourable occasion that could be wished for expelling the Mysoreans out of the Car-

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 10th February 1783, Vol. III, page 916.

natic, and even preventing Hyder's son from succeeding to any considerable part of the power of his father, you now request to be invested with powers to acknowledge Tippoo as the representative of Hyder, and to yield to him whatever his father in all his power, amidst all our distresses, was subjected to resign by the treaty which we had concluded with the Mahrattas.

"It avails the interests of Great Britain in India but little that your President, in a long minute on the 11th of February last, appears sensible of the happy opportunity which has been lost for the recovery of the Carnatic, and the expulsion of our natural enemies; records of laborious altercations, stinging invective, and mutual complaint are no satisfaction to the public in compensation for a neglect that may cost millions, and upon a field where immense sums had been expended to maintain our footing." *

The uneasiness caused by the tidings from Madras led Hastings once more to appeal to the patriotism of Eyre Coote. He asked him to resume command of the army in the field. Though his health had not recovered from the fatigues and anxieties of the late compaign Sir Eyre Coote acceded to the request and embarked on board the *Resolute* for Fort St. George. After a rapid and prosperous voyage the vessel was approaching Madras when at dusk four ships were perceived steering the same course. At the break of day it was discovered

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 11th March 1783, Vol. III, page 912.

that they were enemies. "For the four following days, it being full moon, the night as clear as the day, the chase was most indefatigably pursued; fresh breezes were in the day, calms in the night; in the former we had, in spite of their number, the apparent heels of them, but in the calms the frigates by making use of their sweeps and tow-boats always regained their distance; during the whole chase the four ships were never nearer us than one league, nor further distant than five, till the last day, when we ran two of them out of sight." * But the suspense proved too great for the shattered constitution of Eyre Coote. "On the third day, big with the fate of the service, wrapt up with his country's cause, and feeling, I believe, his own consequence and the benefit the enemy would reap if they captured him, his family also on board, and a thousand other points crowded on his shattered frame the trial proved too great, and the General dropt on deck, struck with a paralytic stroke; from that day, he has been as ill as mortality is capable of enduring; however, thank God, we have got him on shore, better than could have been expected, and I have hopes that he may yet recover the use of his right side, and be otherwise in time reinstated." * The hopes were not destined to be realised. On the

* Secret Select Committee's Proc. 7th May 1783, Vol. III, page 943.

27th April 1783 Colonel Owen wrote: "Your good and great General, Sir Eyre Coote, is no more, worn down by severe illness and fatigue both of body and mind, a very martyr to the public cause. He this afternoon, about 5 o'clock, resigned his breath, thank God, seeming without pain; his last two days were remarkably placid and serene." * To his native land in the spring which followed his death were taken the remains of Eyre Coote and buried in the quiet village of Rockwood in Hampshire. A sumptuous monument was erected in Westminster Abbey to commemorate his worth.† He was a brave soldier and a great captain. His military acquirements were extensive, both from study and experience, and his movements were bold, comprehensive, and cautious. With cool reflection he planned his operations and with unflinching resolution, amidst appalling difficulties, he executed them. In him daring valour was combined with patience and sweetness of temper. In the hour of danger and trial his singular serenity roused the hopes of his veterans, and his unaffected kindness and consideration for them won the affection of the European soldiers and made him the idol of the native troops.

The death of Eyre Coote was a severe blow to

* Letter from Colonel Owen.—Secret Select Committee's Proc. 7th May 1783, Vol. III, page 945.

† Wilke's Mysore, Volume I, page 463.

Hastings' plans of retrieving the desperate state of the Carnatic. But his resolution never faltered to conduct vigorously the war against Tippoo; and he wrote to the Madras Government absolutely forbidding them to make peace with the Mysore Chief. The Poona Government had, after many months' delay, ratified the Treaty of Salbai, and Hastings hopes that by the aid of the Nizam and the Mahrattas a single campaign vigorously conducted should lead to his overthrow. But General Stuart was incapable of vigorous action, and Lord Macartney was bent on making peace. When news reached India that the French had concluded peace with the English, the Governor of Madras again wrote to the Supreme Government asking for power to arrange a treaty with Tippoo. Hastings replied: "You require our consent to treat with Tippoo on the basis of the Mahratta treaty, and the pacification which has lately taken place in Europe. By both these authorities peace is already formally concluded with Tippoo if he will accept of peace, and by the former the Peishwa is bound to compel him to it if he shall refuse; therefore we cannot consent to any direct and independent treaty with Tippoo, nor to any conclusive agreement whatsoever which you may make with him, except for a cessation of hostilities."* He added: "Respecting your claim

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 4th September 1783, Vol. III, page 1015.

on Tippoo for a reimbursement of the expenses of the war, and a compensation for the losses sustained by the invasion of the Carnatic, we can only express our astonishment at your making it the subject of a serious proposal, and of serious reproach to us for omitting it in our treaty with the Mahrattas; but, in short, had it been ever practicable, your mode of proceedings would have effectually defeated every chance of obtaining it. To solicit peace in order to claim a reimbursement for the expenses of the war is a new doctrine in negotiation which will not answer in India, and we doubt of its efficacy in any country."* The letter closes with the emphatic remark: "We have only again to repeat that we will not consent to your making any direct treaty of peace with Tippoo Saheb."* Lord Macartney, contrary to these express orders, continued negotiations with Tippoo, but the Mysore Chief for three months treated his proposals with silent contempt. At length the gallant capture of Cannanore by a small body of English troops,† and the want of success which attended his own arms, led Tippoo to consent to negotiate a treaty‡ which was signed on the 11th

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 4th September 1783, Vol. III, page 1015.

† For detailed account see Selections from the Bombay State Papers Home Series), Volume I, page 97.

‡ A copy of the Treaty will be found in the Selections from the Bombay State Papers, Vol. II, page 316.

of March 1784. The terms were a mutual restoration of all conquests, and a severe struggle of four years left neither of the contending parties with any advantage. The treaty, though it made a temporary peace, was a provocation to future war. It entailed the necessity of another conflict to correct the arrogance with which it inspired Tippoo.

Hastings objected to the form of the treaty, as it made no mention of the Nawab of Arcot and excluded him from a participation in the peace stipulated for his dominions. This the Governor General regarded as an avowed usurpation of his right of sovereignty and subversive of the principles of justice and good faith. But he considered peace to be "an object too valuable to be rejected if it can be retained with honour," and he expressed his willingness to sign the treaty provided it were accompanied with a declaratory clause which should include the Nawab of Arcot as an essential party to it. Hastings also objected to the treaty on account of the total omission of the names of the Peishwa and Mahdajee Sindia, who had both striven to compel Tippoo to comply with the treaty of Salbai. "The Mahrattás," he wrote, "after having manifested to the world the decided part they had taken, were left exposed to the consequences of Tippoo's resentment, since the treaty was settled without any provision for them, or even

allusion to them, although the peace itself was dependent on the treaty with Sindia, and was in a great measure, if not absolutely, the effect of their vigorous interposition." In order to soothe the wounded feelings of Sindia, and to reconcile him to the treaty, Hastings wrote him a letter in which after declaring that "the treaty was in every respect conformable to that of Salbai," he endeavoured to make up for the inattention which had been shown to his Government in the form of the treaty by ascribing to him and the Mahratta State that degree of merit in the completion of it which he thought was simply their due.* Hastings' apprehensions that the Mahrattas would be offended at their names being omitted from the treaty were not without foundation. His letter, however, dispelled the unfavourable impression created by the treaty. Hastings wrote: "Sindia felt that some declaration of this kind was necessary not only to preserve the consequence of the Mahratta Government in the eyes of its neighbours from being diminished by the inattention shown towards it by the deputies from Fort St. George, but also to justify himself to the ministers of his superior for having led them into measures which, whatever might have been

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 13th July 1874, Vol. III, page 1104

their effect with regard to the English Government, had been attended with no honour to the Mahratta State, and threatened to involve it in a war with Tippoo, of which the first movements were produced by a plan concerted with us, and our participation in it assured under a new engagement, but which they were now left to conduct by themselves. So strongly was Sindia impressed with these ideas that he thought it necessary to desire that a similar declaration should be given to him by the Board "* And although it was "contrary to the forms of our constitution which prescribed that all correspondence with the princes of India should be carried on through the Governor General singly,"* Hastings recommended the Board to authorise him to send Sindia in their name a written declaration to the same effect as that contained in his letter to him. With pardonable pride he informed the Board: "It is in some degree foreign to the present subject, yet I cannot refrain from imparting to you the pleasing satisfaction which I myself feel in observing the great and evident change that has within these few years taken place with regard to our Government in the opinions and dispositions of the principal powers of Hindustan. We seem now to have regained our proper weight in the political system, and the

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 13th July 1784, Vol. III, page 105.

neighbouring States, who formerly shrunk from our advances, are eager to participate in our views, and to connect their interests with ours."*

The great change, to use his modest words, that had taken place was due to the courage and statesmanship of Hastings. Menaced by foes on all sides, ill-supported by his masters, surrounded by colleagues who thwarted, embarrassed and intrigued against him, he contrived by his individual energies to raise the Company from being a body of merchants and adventurers into the most powerful State in the politics of India. Englishmen have grown so accustomed to being the masters of India that they have not sufficiently realised the difficulty of Hastings' task, or the genius of the man whose far sight first saw and whose brave and confident patience realised this romantic idea of his country's greatness. As he told the House of Commons:—

"The valour of others acquired, I enlarged and gave shape and consistency to the dominion which you hold there; I preserved it; I sent forth its armies with an effectual but economical hand, through unknown and hostile regions, to the support of your other possessions; to the retrieval of one from degradation and dishonour; and of the other from utter

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 13th July 1784, Vol. III, page 105.

loss and subjection. I maintained the wars which were of your formation, or that of others, not of mine. I won one member * of the great Indian confederacy from it by an act of seasonable restitution; with another † I maintained a secret intercourse, and converted him into a friend; a third‡ I drew off by diversion and negotiation, and employed him as the instrument of peace. When you cried out for peace, and your cries were heard by those who were the object of it, I resisted this, and every other species of counteraction, by rising in my demands, and accomplished a peace, and I hope everlasting, with one great State;§ and I at least afforded the efficient means by which a peace, if not so durable, more seasonable at least, was accomplished with another.‖

"I gave you all, and you have rewarded me with confiscation, disgrace and a life of impeachment."

* The Nizam. † Moodajee Boosla
‡ Mahadajee Sindia. § The Mahrattas.
‖ Tippoo Sultan.

CHAPTER VII.

RESIGNATION AND RETURN TO ENGLAND.

At the time when Hastings was straining every nerve to baffle the foes of England in India, and his efforts were about to be crowned with success, news reached him of the severe censures which had been passed on his conduct by the Secret Committee of the House of Commons. This was speedily followed by intelligence of the subsequent resolution of the House that it was the duty of the Directors to recall him. The Court of Directors decided that it was expedient to remove him, but the Court of Proprietors rescinded their resolution. In December 1782 Hastings wrote a letter to Lord Shelburne, who had succeeded Lord Rockingham as prime minister, in which he vigorously defended his foreign policy. He stated with truth that the invasion of the Carnatic was due to a great confederacy against all the British Governments, and that he had no concern in the origin of the Mahratta war, but "the prosecution of it was mine, and the Malwa peace is exclusively mine." "Forgive me," he writes, "the boast when I add that I have been the instrument of rescuing one Presidency from infamy and both from annihilation." Fearing that his conduct at Benares might be misrepresented and misconstrued, he forwarded to Lord Shelburne a copy of the narrative which he had ordered to be print-

ed of what had taken place. "It may perhaps prove," he wrote, "a gratification of curiosity to your Lordship to receive a book which is, every process of it, the manufacture of the country." Hastings' fears were well-founded. Fox and Burke, annoyed at the Court of Proprietors' refusal to recall him, had begun to attack the Benares case with all the invectives they could command. In February 1782 took place the famous coalition between Fox and North, and the combined parties defeated the ministry on a motion concerning peace. The same month Hastings received a copy of the resolutions of the Court of Directors condemning his conduct in the affairs of Benares as a breach of treaty, and justifying Cheyt Sing. He regarded the resolution not only in the light of a personal insult, but as an incentive to the princes of India to throw off the authority of the Company and assassinate their servants. For the sake of his masters he had shrunk from no danger and no responsibility, and they had condemned him. It would have been more profitable to him to have followed a less arduous and safer course. The words he wrote to a friend reveal how deeply he felt the wrongs done to him :—

"I could have guarded myself most effectually against their censures by avoiding all responsibility, and covering

myself with their orders in whatever I did. I could have kept their troops and treasure at home, when the Presidency at Bombay was engaged in schemes to which it was confessedly unequal. I could have suffered the disgrace of the unhappy affair of Wargaum to remain an indelible stain on the British name. It was no concern of mine. I could have suffered the Carnatic to fall an easy prey to Hyder, when Francis opposed the measures which I suggested for its preservation, and I could have justified it on the principle of self-preservation, the prior care due to the first possessions of the Company, the want of authority from home, the season of the year, which would render it an act of madness to send their troops to perish by sea, and by a fair estimate of ways and means, which would prove that we had not assets for such an enterprise. I could have acquiesced in the violations of faith, which the Governmont of Madras were guilty of towards Nizam Ali, and contented myself with protesting against it. I could have seen Chimnajee lay Bengal waste, for it was scarce in his power to avoid it, and nothing but my private aid prevented it. I could have sat quietly down when our ordinary resources would yield no more supplies for the war, and ruin threatened. What business had I at Benares?

"But if I had observed this discreet and safe conduct, let me ask not you, my friend, but my most rancorous enemies, what would have been the state of the Company, or whether it is likely that it would at this time have existence?

"In the meantime I could have provided an ample fortune for myself, by means which no one could have assumed to hurt or discredit me."

In a letter to the Court of Directors, Hastings carefully and eloquently reviewed his whole policy.

After apologizing for whatever might appear offensive in it, he declared that he should have submitted in silence to the severest expressions of censure had they been no more than expressions and applied to real facts. "But when the censures are not applied to real facts and are such as substantially affect my moral character, I should myself be an accomplice in the injury if I suffered the slightest imputation to remain which it was in my power to efface." He refuted by cogent arguments the statement that Cheyt Sing was an independent prince and that he was guilty of any breach of faith in his treatment of him. He then proceeded with great earnestness to deprecate the suggestion of the Court to restore Cheyt Sing, and declared that he would immediately resign if Cheyt Sing were reinstated at Benares. Then enlarging with considerable force on the services he had done the Company, and the patience and temper with which he had submitted to all the indignities which had been heaped upon him, he requested the Court to obtain the early nomination of a person to succeed him, and declared his intention to resign their service as soon as he could do it without prejudice to their affairs.

When Hastings wrote this letter, he fixed upon the beginning of the year for his departure to England, but shortly after despatching

it an event occurred which compelled him to alter his plans. The Nawab of Oudh and his ministers had appealed against the conduct of Mr. Bristow, the Resident, and "impelled me,' 'wrote Hastings, "by every tie of justice, honour, and public duty to sacrifice every consideration that regarded myself alone, if necessary, for his redress." It was a costly sacrifice, for it entailed upon Hastings separation from his wife. His love and admiration for her were unbounded. There was not such a being in the world, as long as she was by his side, nothing could come amiss to him: the cares and fatigues of the day made no impression on his spirits. When she had left he wrote: "I miss you in every instant and incident of my life, and everything seems to wear a dead stillness around me; I come home as to a solitude." His greatest comfort in her absence was to read her letters. "It contains your words and your thoughts, and I had rather brood over the melancholy passions excited by it, than be a sharer in the most pleasing entertainments that nature or art could afford me." The only action in his lonely and stormy life concerning which a doubt seems to have ever crossed his mind was his resolve to part from her. "I think we have ill-judged. The reflection has often for an instant occurred to me that we were wrong, but I constantly repressed it. I urged everything that could

fix the resolution beyond the power of recall, and felt a conscious pride in the sacrifice I was preparing to make."* The state of his wife's health laid him under the stern necessity of sending her to England: the state of India compelled him to remain at his post. "I will resign this thankless office," said he, "on the first favourable opportunity; but I will not be driven from it either by the folly of my subordinates or the injustice of my superiors. I have saved India, in spite of them all, from foreign conquest, neither will I quit my post until the internal affairs of this great country shall have been restored to something like order." Bengal and Behar were threatened with famine, and Hastings appointed a committee to take measures for the relief of the people. He also applied the whole energies of his mind to the ever-ungracious task of retrenchment and reform. The state of affairs in Benares and Oudh caused him grave anxiety. He had always regarded Oudh as our bulwark against foreign aggression, and its prosperity and good government as essential to the safety of our own dominion. From the first moment that he had become Governor General he had courted an Oudh alliance with unceasing assiduity, and he had sedulously cultivated the friendship of the Nawab Shuja-Dowla and his son. "His titular rank of Vizier of the Empire," wrote

* "Echoes from Old Calcutta," page 302.

Hastings, "rendered him a conspicuous object of view to all the States and Chiefs of India, and on the moderation and justice with which the British Government in Bengal exercised its influence over him, many points most essential to its political strength and to the honour of the British name depended."* Hastings was of opinion that Bristow had treated the Nawab neither with moderation nor justice. When the latter met him at Chunar he had persuaded him to agree to the admission of the assistance of the Resident in the charge then specially given to his minister of his finances and public disbursements. Dissatisfied with the conduct of Mr. Middleton, to whom this charge was first committed, Hastings nominated Mr. Bristow to it in his stead. "To this I had various and powerful inducements. The principal was the reiterated order of the Court of Directors for his appointment; secondly, the wish of the other Members of the Council urging it; thirdly, their declaration of uniting to support my authority, and other concurrent circumstances, removing the objection which had hitherto opposed it; fourthly, a reliance on the personal gratitude of Mr. Bristow for my optional nomination of him to so important a trust; and fifthly, his assurances and a pledge given me for the performance

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 29th September 1783, Vol. III, page 1018.

of them in which I then reposed a religious confidence."* This confidence, Hastings considered, Bristow had betrayed. He had enjoined him to study on every occasion to conciliate the good-will of the Nawab and "to show him every ostensible and external mark of respect," but the Resident treated the Prince as a dependant, and prescribed to him "the number of horses which he should be allowed to use" and the dishes which should be cooked for his table."† He also interfered in every department of the State. The Nawab complained to the Board, and they requested Bristow to answer the charges brought against him. Six weeks having elapsed without a reply being received from him, Hastings moved that Bristow be recalled, the office of Resident dissolved, and the Nawab and his minister made responsible for the payment of the Company's debts. All the proposals were, after considerable discussion, rejected. Bristow in due course of time replied and alleged that he was only acting according to the orders of the Governor General, who insisted on the claims of the Company being satisfied. Hastings was a statesman who identified his own personality with the objects of his administration, and the defence of Bristow was regard-

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 29th September 1783, Vol. III, page 1019.
† Ditto ditto 27th December 1783, Vol. III, page 1045.

ed by him in the light of a personal insult. He was accustomed to command and to be obeyed. The temerity of Bristow aroused his anger, and the opposition of his colleagues increased it. He knew they did not possess the ability or the courage of his old opponents, and that they had only plucked up spirit to attack him when his recall was imminent. He felt that he had not that collected firmness of mind which he once possessed "and which gave such a superiority in my contests with Clavering and his associates. My last year's sickness has left a debility upon my constitution which I cannot remove, nor shall I, till I try a colder climate."* He however possessed a sufficient amount of the old imperious vigour to baffle the spirit of cabal in his Council. He told them that he held them solely responsible for the state of anarchy in Oude since they would neither enforce his instructions nor give Mr. Bristow others. This alarmed them. After many discussions they offered to recall Mr. Bristow if the Vizier liquidated his enormous debt to the Company by bills on creditable bankers "payable half in one month and the remaining half in two months from the date of Mr. Bristow's surrender of his office to the Vizier." And they added—"We shall agree to this arrangement on the express condition that the Governor General will hold himself re-

* Memoirs of Warren Hastings, by Gleig, Volume III, page 122.

sponsible to the Company and the public for the faithful performance of these engagements on the part of the Vizier and his ministers, as well as for the security of the internal peace of the country, to maintain which and enforce these arrangements we shall give him our utmost support."* Hastings immediately replied, rejecting the offer. He pointed out that it was impossible for the Vizier to pay even half of the sum owed in the time mentioned, and he added—"Nor if the Nawab Vizier would engage to pay it and I believed him capable of paying it would I 'hold myself responsible to the Company and to the public for the faithful performance of such an engagement,' because I do not think it consistent with truth or the regard which every man ought to pay to his own reputation to bind himself to the performance of acts which depend solely on the ability and will of another."† His colleagues replied "that they could not imagine nor suggest that the Governor General should be answerable in his private fortune for so large a sum or that his responsibility should extend further than those obligations which constitute responsibility in a decided recommendation of any measure contrary to the general opinion of the majority of the Board."‡ Hastings

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 27th December 1783, Vol. III, page 1050.
† Ditto ditto page 1051.
‡ Ditto ditto page 1052.

gladly consented "to be specially answerable for the propriety of the measure," and the Board resolved to recall Bristow, and withdraw the Company's Residency from the Court of Oude. "I have indeed conquered," wrote Hastings, "but I feel little inclination to triumph in my victory; for my hands are yet fettered, and such is the wretched state of the Vizier's affair, that nothing can be more discouraging than the prospect before me. If the Nawab Vizier shall desire me to come to his assistance I shall offer it to the Board, and shall be better pleased if they refuse than if they assent to it. Yet I will do what I can to gain their assent."* A short time afterwards he informed a friend that he had written a minute tendering his services to go to Lucknow and he added—

"I know that I can do much more if I am myself the immediate agent, than I can by distant influence and a delegated authority, but I may fail, for most wretched is the state of the Vizier's dominions, and I may lose my reputation in the consequences of it. On the other hand, I may be the instrument of retrieving it and of paying the debt which is due from the Nawab to the Company, and if I do, I shall close my service with glory and leave a lasting good name behind me, whatever reproaches the inventive malice of my countrymen may cast upon me for having saved the national interests and honour from the ruin which, but for my exertions, would have fallen on both."†

* Memoirs of Warren Hastings, by Gleig, Volume III, page 14.
† Ditto ditto age 143.

The Council after some discussion gave an unwilling assent to Hastings' proposal to proceed to Lucknow. In January 1784 his wife sailed alone for England, and in the following month he started on his journey to Oude. He made a stay of five days at Benares and sent to the Council a long and minute account of the wretched condition of that province.* "From the confines of Buxar to Benares," he wrote, "I was fatigued and followed by the clamours of the discontented inhabitants." Their discontent and distress was due to a long continued drought and to "a defective if not a corrupt and oppressive administration."† The land agents and tax gatherers exacted from the proprietors of the actual harvest a large increase in kind on their stipulated rent. Those who held their fields by the tenure of paying one-half of the produce of their crops were robbed of nearly the whole by false measurements, and from those whose engagements were for a fixed rent in money, the half or a greater proportion was taken in kind. Trade was paralysed by the extortion and oppression of the custom-house authorities. "The exorbitant rates," the Governor General wrote, "exacted by an arbitrary valuation of the goods, the prac-

* The minute will be found in Secret Select Committee's Proc., 20th April 1784, Vol. III, page 1082.

† Secret Select Committee's Proc., 20th April 1784, Vol. III, page 1082.

tice of exacting duties twice on the same goods, first from the seller and afterwards from the buyer, and the vexatious disputes and delays drawn on the merchants by these oppressions were loudly complained of, and some instances of this kind were said to exist even at thev ery time when I was in Benares. Under such circumstances we are not to wonder if the merchants of foreign countries are discouraged from resorting to Benares, and if the commerce of that province should annually decay."* Hastings forwarded to the Council an elaborate plan for reforming the administration, for making the Raja more directly interested in its working, and for the appointment of fresh officials. The Board resolved "that the Governor General be authorized to carry into execution the plan submitted, the Governor being responsible for its effects, as a temporary expedient."†

From Benares Hastings proceeded to Lucknow. He first devoted himself to the intricate task of adjusting the accounts between the Vizier and the Company. It was a matter to which he had devoted particular attention and he suceeded in persuading the Vizier to give his consent to an equitable arrangement. After adjusting the accounts, by wise handling of the finances and effecting considerable retrenchments he put

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 20th April 1784, Vol III, page 1083.
Ditto ditto 30th June 1784, Vol. III, page 1099.

the Nawab in a position to pay his debts. He also took great trouble in arranging a revenue settlement for five years which would afford relief to the husbandmen suffering from years of scarcity. The military establishment of the Nawab had been both inefficient and costly and he placed it on a regular and economical basis. After leaving Lucknow he discovered that the Vizier suffered a hardship "from the army subsidy being kept up at its original rate although the number of troops employed by us for the defence of his dominions has been greatly reduced."* The reduction was due to the strength of each regiment being reduced from one thousand to seven hundred men. Hastings wrote: "Neither the Vizier nor any of his ministers have ever mentioned to me this deficiency, but it is not the less our duty to take it into consideration. In all our adjustments of accounts with the Vizier for many years back, we have been regulated by the strictest regard to justice, and the Vizier on his part has on every occasion relied most implicitly on our justice as well as on the accuracy of our Accountant-General. Let us then confirm that confidence which is so happily reposed in us by pointing out mistakes, even although we must be losers by correcting them."†

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 1st November 1784, Vol. III, page 1113.
† Ditto ditto ditto page 1114.

To remedy the injustice Hastings proposed that the cost of the regiment at Lucknow, for which the Vizier paid a separate amount, should be included in that of the troops for which the original subsidy was settled. The proposal was vetoed by the Council, and they also repealed the order given by Hastings that a costly detachment of the Company's troops stationed at the Nawab's expense upon his northern frontier should be recalled.*

Finding that his colleagues were bent on maintaining the detachment, Hastings asked their consent to the Nawab lending it to the son of the Moghul Emperor to assist him in the expulsion of the Sikhs from the territories of which they had lately possessed themselves in the neighbourhood of Delhi. The Governor General regarded the growing power of the Sikhs as a grave danger. He wrote—"A new source of serious contemplation has arisen from a nearer quarter, namely, that of the Sikhs, a people who from a mean sect of religious schismatics have rapidly grown into the members of a dominion extending from the most western branch of the Attock to the walls of Delhi. They are by their bodily frame and habits of life eminently suited to the military profession; but this

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 1st November 1784, Vol. III, page 117.

propensity is qualified by a spirit of independence which is a great check to its exertion. Every village has its separate and distinct ruler acknowledging no control but that of the people of his own immediate community, who in their turn yield him little more than nominal submission."* Conquest and a man of superior capacity and enterprise aided by the spirit of religious enthusiasm might, however, weld them into a nation. The extinction of the Moghul Empire which was rapidly approaching to its fall he considered might give birth to a new dominion. "We are too apt," he wrote, "to despise the danger which we have not experienced, and to conclude that what has not happened in the ordinary course of events never will happen. On such a presumption my conclusions may expose me to the ridicule of those who may deem them the mere effusions of a wild imagination. I am willing to submit to this consequence if the events which I have foreboded shall be prevented by seasonable means of opposition; but I trust to time, and that not distant, for verifying my prediction if this people is permitted to grow into maturity without interruption."† Time verified the prediction. The genius of one man, the ruler of a petty tribe, welded the

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 14th December 1784, Vol. III, page 124.
† Ditto ditto 11th May 1784, Vol III, page 1090.

Sikhs into a great kingdom, and established a power greater than that of Sivaji and Hyder Ali against which we had to struggle for the mastery of India.

The Prince, whom Hastings was anxious to aid in a campaign against the Sikhs, had escaped in disgrace from the court of Delhi. The Moghul Emperor, his father, was a mere puppet in the hands of his Minister Afrasiab Khan. Afrasiab Khan had offered to enter, under the name and sanction of the Emperor, into a treaty with the English and the Vizier, but Hastings rejected the offer because "so far from promoting the wishes of the King, we should have to encounter the secret opposition of himself and his ancient servants, and perhaps the declared enmity of many other factions now lying dormant."* The Governor General had, however, expressed the opinion "that it would be for the credit and interest of the English Government to exert their endeavours to relieve the Shah from the thraldom of his ministers and to establish his authority at least in his dominions," and when the fugitive Prince prayed his assistance, he was not unwilling to grant it. He wrote:—"Fallen as the House of Timur is, it is yet the relic of the most illustrious line of the Eastern World; its sovereignty is universally acknowledged, though the

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 11th May 1784, Vol. III, page 1089.

substance of it no longer exists, and the Company itself derives its constitutional dominions from its ostensible bounty." The wretched state of the House of Timur appealed to his imperial imagination, and he considered it not only a generous, but a wise policy to prevent its extinction. In the confusion which was certain to follow its fall he considered some new adventurer might start up from the general mass who would constitute a new dominion and join to it all the powers and prerogatives of the past. Hastings felt that those who had the Moghul Emperor in their hands must become the legitimate masters of India, and he wished to gain for his country that position. "I do not want to send armies into the field," he wrote; "nor to disturb the repose which our Government enjoys and requires, after the fatigues and bruises which it has sustained from a long and accumulated warfare. I want no more than the power to dictate, and I am persuaded that I shall have no need to enforce it."* The Board, however, were unwilling to adopt so bold a policy and refused to countenance any expedition in favour of the Moghul Emperor.

Not only by arms and by diplomacy did Hastings extend the influence of England, but also by commerce. It was his capacious mind that

* Memoirs of Hastings, by Gleig, Volume III, page 193.

first conceived the plan of opening friendly commercial intercourse between the people over whom he ruled and the natives of the lofty tableland behind the snowy peaks to the north. He had when Governor of Bengal begun a friendly correspondence with the rulers of Thibet and Bhutan, and on the 13th of May 1774 he sent the first British mission to Thibet under Mr. George Bogle. On the 26th of February 1775, the Governor General laid before the Board a letter from Bogle informing them of his interview with Teshoo Lama, and an interesting memorandum on the trade of Thibet. "The principal articles of merchandise," he writes, "between Bengal and Thibet are broadcloth, atter, skins, neel (indigo), pearls, coral, amber, and other beads, chauk, spices, tobacco, sugar, Malda stripped sattins and a few white cloths, chiefly coarse; the return is made in gold dust, musk and cow-tails."* When Bogle returned from Thibet, he found Francis, Clavering, and Monson in power, and as he was a *protégé* of Hastings, he could expact no favour from them. The changes made in the administration had deprived him of all his appointments, and he had no employment but to act as one of Hastings' assistants. In December 1775 the Governor General proposed that Bogle be allowed a salary of ₹1,200 a

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 24th February 1775, Vol. I., page 254.

month during the time he was employed on the mission, and the motion was carried. It was a small sum considering the good work done and the amount which men situated like Bogle made in those days. When Hastings on the death of Monson regained his power, he once more turned his attention to establishing free commercial intercourse between Thibet and Bengal. On the 9th of April 1779 George Bogle was appointed to proceed again to Bhutan and Thibet "for the purpose of cultivating and improving the good understanding subsisting between the Chiefs of those countries and the Government, and to endeavour to establish a free and lasting intercourse of trade with the Kingdom of Thibet, and the other States to the northward of Bengal." The Lama, whose respect and confidence Bogle had won, was then on a visit to Pekin, and he desired Bogle to go round by sea to Canton, promising to obtain the Emperor's pass for him to proceed and join him in the capital. The death of the Lama and of Bogle caused for a time the intention of sending a mission to be abandoned. But when Hastings got letters from Thibet informing him that the soul of the late Lama had entered and animated the body of an infant, he proposed to send a second deputation to Thibet. The Board consented, and Mr. Charles Turner was appointed to proceed on the mission. On his

journey to Lucknow Hastings met at Patna Turner returning from Thibet, who handed him a report on the results of his mission and also a narrative of his interview with tne young Lama.* "Teesho Lama," he wrote, "is at this time about eighteen months of age. He did not speak a word but made most expressive signs and conducted himself with astonishing dignity and decorum. His complexion is of that hue which in England we should term rather brown but not without colour. His features good, small black eyes, an animated expression of countenance, and altogether I thought him one of the handsomest children I had ever seen."† The description of the interview between the English Envoy and the Great Lama, the high priest of millions of beings, is inexpressibly sad. "The little creature turned, looking steadfastly towards me with the appearance of much attention while I spoke, and nodded with repeated but slow movements of the head as though he understood and approved every word but could not utter a reply. The parents, who stood by all the time, eyed their son with a look of affection, and a smile expressive of heartfelt joy at the propriety of the young Lama's conduct. His whole

* Account of an embassy to the Court of the Teeshoo Lama in Thibet, by Captain Samuel Turner.

† Secret Select Committee's Proc., 13th April 1784, Vol. III, page 1077.

regard was turned to us, he was silent and sedate, never once looking towards his parents, as if under their influence at the time, and with whatever pains his manners may have been formed so correct, I must own his behaviour on this occasion appeared perfectly natural and spontaneous, and not directed by any action or sign of authority." * The next day the envoy again visited Teesho Lama to present some curiosities he had brought for him. "He was very much struck with a small clock and had it held to him watching for a long time the revolutions of the minute hand. He admired it, but with gravity, and without any childish emotion." † When he paid his last visit to the Lama, Turner "received his despatches for the Governor General and from his parents two pieces of satin for the Governor with many compliments. They presented me with a vest lined with lamb-skins, making me many assurances of a long remembrance, and observing that, at this time Teesho Lama is an infant and incapable of conversing, but they hoped to see me again when he shall come of age. I replied that by favour of the Lama I might again visit this country."† Turner never had another opportunity of visiting the country

* Secret Select Committee's Proc., 13th April 1784, Vol. III, page 1080.
† Ditto ditto ditto page 1081.

and no English official has since held personal intercourse with the rulers of Thibet. So completely was the policy of opening commercial intercourse between India and the trans-Himalayan regions abandoned that the very history of the Hastings' negotiations was forgotten, and most of the valuable records of the Thibet and Bhutan missions have been lost.*

The expeditions of Bogle and Turner to Thibet were not the only voyages of discovery which Hastings despatched. He caused the harbours and rivers of Cochin China to be surveyed, and directed the explorer to penetrate as far as he could into the interior. He also had the shores of the Red Sea explored, with the view of opening, by that line, a more direct and rapid communication between England and India. He also collected much valuable information regarding the Kingdom of Ava and its adjoining districts. His untiring energy led him not only to explore the countries of the East, but also the languages of Asia. He was familiar with Arabic and Persian. Though unacquainted with Sanskrit he encouraged learned pundits to settle in Calcutta, and gave them support

* Narrative of the mission of George Bogle to Thibet, by Clements R. Markham. Mr. Markham writes—"All attempts to find adequate materials among the records at Calcutta or the India Office have failed." A note in the Consultations informs us that the original journal was sent to the Directors. I however hope that a careful search among the bundles in the Foreign Office may yet bring to light a copy of the journal.

while they pursued their researches. The Asiatic Society and the Mahomedan College at Calcutta are splendid monuments of his zeal for the advancement of Oriental learning and education.

The time was drawing near for him to leave the land for whose welfare he had laboured with unwearied energy. In November 1784 Hastings returned to Calcutta from Lucknow. On his journey down he received letters from home announcing that Pitt had dissolved Parliament, and that the coalition party had been defeated at the elections. Major Scott told him that the Lord Chancellor considered that the ministry ought to give him a peerage and a red ribbon, and that His Lordship did not know a man who cut so great a figure upon the stage of the world as Hastings. To his other extraordinary actions must be added that of giving a ministry to Great Britain, for he had put an end to the late ministry as completely as if he had taken a pistol and shot them through the head one after another. Pitt had also declared that he looked upon Hastings to be a very great and indeed a wonderful man. The news of the downfall of his foes, and the flattering terms in which the new ministers spoke of him, led Hastings to hope that he would be permitted to pursue his policy without interruption from home, or obstruction from his colleagues. He wrote to his wife: "I

shall abide by the resolution which I communicated to you in my letter of the 24th of September, that is to say, if I am required by authority to stay, and have the powers given me which ought to belong to my office, and proper objects are assigned for my stay, I will stay, however repugnant it may be to my own feelings, or hazardous to my health." Hastings had about this time also heard of Pitt's intention to introduce an East India Bill, and he trusted that it would grant him the powers he had so long desired. On the 20th of December he received a packet "by way of Bussorah," which put an end to all his hopes and hesitations. It brought him a copy of Pitt's Bill and of his introductory speech which Hastings considered more inimical to him than all the onslaughts of Fox and Burke. On the 27th December he wrote: "I have seen, read, and abstracted Mr. Pitt's Bill. It has determined me. I shall make an early trial of my colleagues on the affairs of Oude and if they will engage to abide by my engagements there, I will depart as soon as the *Barrington* is ready. She is now loading." The dream of his life was shattered; and in the account of his stewardship which he wrote on his voyage home he poured out his feelings. "Yet may I feel a regret to see that hope which I had too fondly indulged, and which I had sustained during thirteen laboured years with a perseverance against a succession of difficulties

which might have overcome the constancy of an abler mind, of being in some period of time, however remote, allowed to possess and exercise the full powers of my station, of which I had hitherto held little more than the name and responsibility; and to see with it the belief, which I had as fondly indulged, that I should become the instrument of raising the British name, and the substantial worth of its possessions in India, to a degree of prosperity proportioned to such a trust, both vanish in an instant, like the illusions of a dream; with the poor and only consolation left me of the conscious knowledge of what I could have effected, had my destiny ordained that I should attain the situation to which I aspired, and that I have left no allowable means untried, by which I might have attained it."

On the 13th of January 1785 Warren Hastings delivered to the Board a minute in which he informed them of his intention to relinquish the service, if his colleagues would give him an absolute and unqualified promise to carry out the late arrangements made with the Nawab Vizier. Having received from his colleagues an explicit answer agreeing to abide by the agreement, he wrote a formal resignation of his powers to his old masters. He told them with perfect truth that no man ever served them with a zeal superior to his own.

On the 1st of February Hastings attended for the last time a meeting of the Council over which he had presided for thirteen years, and after wishing his colleagues a warm farewell and paying a handsome tribute of praise to those who had aided him in the heavy task of government, he surrendered the keys of office and brought to a close his great administration. Had he been guilty of the crimes laid to his charge, so unwearied was the pertinacity and malice of his enemies, that it cannot be doubted they would have been able to furnish more satisfactory evidence of his guilt. Of that guilt they never produced any proof. In answer to the charge of having oppressed the natives by extortions and exactions, there are the testimonials of all ranks of people in India in his favour. As he told his Judges: "It is very seldom that mankind are grateful enough to do even common justice to a fallen minister; and I believe there never was an instance in the annals of human nature, of an injured people rising up voluntarily to bear false witness in favour of a distant and persecuted oppressor." Burke told the House of Lords that the testimonials were extorted, and "that the hands were yet warm with the thumbscrews that had been put on them." It is incredible that Hastings' successor, Lord Cornwallis, a man of the noblest and gentlest character, would have countenanced acts of oppression and cruelty to gain petitions

in favour of Hastings. In fact, when Hastings' attorney informed him that the natives of India were desirous of bearing testimony to the merits of Hastings, and requested permission that the officers of Government might have authority to transmit to the Governor General in Council any testimonials tendered by the natives, Lord Cornwallis caused a cautious letter to be circulated among all the Collectors and Residents, which stated: "With this request the Governor General in Council has been pleased to comply, and I have therefore to inform you, that should any such address be tendered to you, you are at liberty to receive and forward them to me. The liberty now accorded is merely to receive and transmit testimonials when voluntarilly offered; and you are not to deduce any inference from it that you are authorised to exercise any further interference in this business."* Macaulay, while admitting that Hastings was beloved by the people whom he governed, attaches little or no importance to the addresses because they may have been due to the influence of English officials. However, we find in the case of Benares that the Resident,

* "Debates of the House of Lords on the events delivered on the trial of Warren Hastings, Esquire. Proceedings of the East India Company in consequence of his Acquittal and Testimonials of the British and Native Inhabitants of India relative to his character and conduct whilst he was Governor General of Fort William in Bengal."—*Debrett MCCXCVII.*

Jonathan Duncan,* a man conspicuous for his courage and high mindedness, refused to forward the addresses to Government on the ground that "as the addresses have no connection with the business of the Company there is no necessity that they (the inhabitants) should come or send to me. Let them do what they think proper." In their address the inhabitants of Benares stated: "He laid the foundations of justice and the pillars of the law. In every shape, we, the inhabitants of this country, during the time of his administration, lived in ease and peace. We are therefore greatly satisfied with, and thankful to him. As the said Mr. Hastings was long acquainted with the modes of government in these regions, so the inmost purpose of his heart was openly and secretly, indeed, bent upon those things which might maintain inviolate our religious advances, and persuasions, and guard us in even the minutest respect from misfortune and calamity. In every way he cherished us in honour and credit." The Pundits and other Brahmins of Benares sent him an address in which they wrote: "Whenever that man of vast reason, the Governor-General, Mr. Hastings, returned to this place, and people of all ranks were assembled, at that time he

* Jonathan Duncan became Governor of Bombay in 1795, and, after having ruled the Presidency with great wisdom for fourteen years, he died on the 11th of August 1811, beloved by men of all classes and creeds.

gladdened the heart of every one by his behaviour, which consisted of kind wishes, and agreeable conversation, expressions of compassion for the distressed, acts of politeness, and a readiness to relieve and protect every one alike without distinction. To please us dull people, he caused a spacious music gallery to be built, at his own expense, over the gateway of the temple of Veesmaswar, which is esteemed the head jewel of all places of holy visitation. He never at any time, nor on any occasion, either by neglecting to promote the happiness of the people, or by looking with the eye of covetousness, displayed an inclination to distress any individual whatsoever." The inhabitants of Moorshedabad also forwarded an address, in which they stated that "the whole period of Mr. Hastings' residence in this country exhibited his good conduct towards the inhabitants. No oppression nor tyranny was admitted over any one. He observed the rules of respect and attention to ancient families. He did not omit the performances of the duties of politeness and civility towards all men of rank and station when an interview took place with them. In affairs concerning the government and revenues, he was not covetous of other men's money and property; he was not open to bribery. He restricted the farmers and officers in their oppressions in a manner that prevented them from exercising that tyranny which motives of

self-interest and private gain might instigate them to observe towards the ryots and helpless. He used great exertions to cultivate the country, to increase the agriculture and the revenues. He transacted the business of the country and revenues without deceit, and with perfect propriety and rectitude. He respected the learned and wise men, and in order for the propagation of learning he built a college, and endowed it with a provision for the maintenance of the students, in so much that thousands reaping the benefits thereof offer up their prayers for the prosperity of England, and for the success of the Company." Quotations of a similar nature from other addresses might be multiplied to any extent. But addresses are not the only evidence we have of the honour and esteem in which Hastings was held by the natives of India. Burke declared in Westminster Hall that under the government of Mr. Hastings the country itself, all its beauty and glory had ended in a jungle for wild beasts.* A Brahmin pilgrim on the banks of the Nerbudda declared that "he had lived under many different Governments and travelled in many countries, but had never witnessed a general diffusion of happi-

* "My Lords, you have seen the very reverse of all this under the government of Mr. Hastings; the country itself, all its beauty and glory ending in a jungle for wild beasts. You have seen flourishing families reduced to implore that pity which the poorest man and the meanest situation might very well call for."—*Burke's Speeches and Correspondence, Volume II, page 438.*

ness equal to that of the natives under the mild and equitable administration of Mr. Hastings."* The testimony of the Brahmin pilgrim was confirmed by Lord Cornwallis, who said in the course of his evidence before the House of Lords that Hastings was much esteemed by the natives: and Sir John Shore (afterwards Lord Teignmouth), "a man of whose integrity, humanity, and honour it is impossible to speak too highly,"† deposed to the same effect.

In answer to the charge that he violated treaties and disregarded the legitimate rights of Native Chiefs, we have the letters of two of the leading native sovereigns to his successor requesting to be treated by him as they were treated by Hastings. There are also letters from the sovereign of Berar, from the Nizam, from Mahdagie Scindia to the King and the Company expressing their strong sense of his justice and good faith. His tender regard for the rights and feelings of the Native Chiefs is testified in the strenuous battle he fought for the Nawab of the Carnatic and the

* Forbes' Oriental Memoirs, Volume II, page 70.—"I cannot forget the words of this respectable pilgrim; we were near a banian tree in the Darbar court when he thus concluded his discourse:—"As the burr-tree, one of the noblest productions in nature, by extending its branches for the comfort and refreshment of all who seek its shelter, is emblematical of the deity, so do the virtues of the Governor resemble the burr-tree; he extends his providence to the remotest districts, and stretches out his arms, far and wide, to afford protection and happiness to his people; such, *Saheb*, is Mr. Hastings."

† Macaulay's Essey on Warren Hastings.

Vizier of Oude. That he was lofty and imperious with those who were disloyal, that he could brook no opposition to his will, may be admitted. But that he was kind and considerate to those who were loyal, and a generous master to those who served him, there are numerous indications in his letters and despatches. He saw that the power of England must be paramount in India, and for the honour and greatness of his country he strove with unwearied energy and unflinching courage, but he also desired that the paramount power should be surrounded by loyal feudatories allowed to govern their States without interference as long as they regarded the welfare and prosperity of their subjects.

Absorbed in the work of legislation and administration, in negotiating treaties, organising armies, and sending forth expeditions, Hastings had scanty leisure to devote to his own affairs, and he proved a poor steward of his private fortune. He told his Judges: "I was too intent upon the means to be employed for preserving India to Great Britain from the hour in which I was informed that France meant to strain every nerve to dispute that empire with us, to bestow a thought upon myself or my own private fortune." It would have been better for his reputation had he bestowed more time on the regulation of his household, and had been less lavish in his expenditure, and

had curbed his generosity. But during his trial it was clearly shown that the charge of having contaminated his hands with unlawful gain was wholly without foundation. It is not, however, by evidence produced at his trial that Hastings has been judged, but the calumnies of political opponents and the exaggerations of fervent orators have been accepted without examination or discrimination. The load of obloquy resting on his memory has in some degree been removed by clearer and juster views of the events of his time and the character of the man who did good service for his country and the land in which he toiled for five and thirty years. His fair fame will not suffer from an examination still more rigid and dispassionate, and for this examination authentic materials are supplied in the State papers that have recently been printed.*

* Selections from the letters, despatches and other State papers preserved in the Foreign Department of the Government of India, 1777-85.

APPENDIX I.

Translation of the Agreement given by HAFIZ RAHMUT CAWN *to the Vizier.*

As the Vizier of the Empire the Nabob Sujah-ul-Dowla will put the Rohilla Sirdars in full possession of their country it is at his own option to effect it either by peace or war. Should the Mahrattas at this time, without coming to an engagement or peace being established, cross the river and retreat owing to the rainy and after season, and after that is elapsed commit disturbances in the country of the Rohillas, the quelling of these disturbances shall belong to the Vizier. The Rohilla Sirdars after the aforesaid business do agree to pay the sum of 40 lacs of rupees on the following terms, *viz.:* As the Mahrattas are now committing disorders in the country of the Rohillas, the Vizier shall march from Shahabad to such place as may be thought proper to arrive at in order that the Rohilla dependants may come out of the jungles and arrive at their own homes. The sum of ten lacs of rupees shall then be paid in ready money in part of the stipulation, and 30 lacs of rupees shall be discharged in three years, beginning from the Fusselly year 1180. This agreement is sealed in the presence of General Sir Robert Barker.

From HAFIZ RAHMUT CAWN, *Chief of the Rohillas, to the Governor.*

After the usual compliments, and expressing his desire of an interview, he proceeds: The bonds of friendship and

affection, and the mutual intercourse which have long subsisted and taken root between me and the English Sirdars may not be unknown to you. Having heard of your fame, I wish that a perfect harmony and concord should be established and confirmed between us; and I hope that you will have the same inclination on your part. It is from these motives, as well as in consideration of there being no difference or disagreement between us, that I represent to you the following few circumstances that you may have them in your memory at the time of discussion.

Last year, when His Majesty and the Mahratta Sirdars were at variance with the Nabob Zabitta Cawn, and when, after confusion was thrown into that Nabob's affairs, His Majesty and the Mahrattas crossed the Ganges to come into these parts, the Rohilla Sirdars, for the protection of their women, fled to the skirts of the jungles; at this time the Vizier of the Empire and General Barker arrived at Shahabad, and sent Captain Harper to me with a message to me to come and join them, which they persisted in with great perseverance. As our interests were equal, I therefore went and had an interview with the gentlemen, when an agreement was concluded between us, in which I agreed to pay 40 lacs of rupees on account of peshcush to the King and the Mahratta Sirdars, and the gentlemen on their part engaged to effect my security, by establishing peace between me and the King and the Mahratta Sirdars, declaring that if they would in a day or two after that march from Shahabad to fall upon and come to extremities with the Mahrattas, and to put an end to their operations. Notwithstanding this, the gentlemen never came to any negociation with the Mahrattas so as to put an end to their operations, nor ventured to attack them, but finally returned towards

Fyzabad, leaving their engagements unfulfilled. When the rainy season commenced, the Mahrattas of themselves crossed the Ganges and encamped in the Doab, threatening me still with hostilities. During the rains I repeatedly called on the Nabob, the General, and Captain Harper to conclude these affairs with His Majesty and the Mahrattas, but they came to no determination on the subject, nor took any measures for effecting security. When the rainy season was drawing to an end, and the Mahrattas had approached near the banks of the Ganges, they then demanded of me sums of money, which after much temporizing I was at last obliged to pay them. Afterwards they went to the presence, and procured a sunnud for Corah and Allahabad, with which they returned to the bank of the Ganges and made preparations of bridges for crossing it; and at the same time sent a person of their confidence to demand payment of the money which had been stipulated, saying it belonged to them and the King; and also with many inducements requested that I would let them pass through my territories, assuring me that they would commit no depredation or ravages on the rayats, and they would pass through with expedition towards the Soubah of Oude, or withersoever they thought proper. They also engaged to remit me a large sum on account of the stipulation, and to do whatever was agreeable, and would give satisfaction to the Rohilla Sirdars. At this juncture the Nabob and the General being arrived near, they sent to me Syed Shaw Muddun and Mahomed Mukrim Cawn, desiring that I would enter into no terms with the Mahrattas; and they would give me back my engagement for 40 lacs of rupees, and do everything both for my present and future security. Having therefore in view the long friendship which had subsisted between the Nabob Vizier, the English gentlemen and myself, I declined all

officers made by the Mahrattas, and came over to them, in revenge for which it is well known that the Mahrattas re-crossed the Ganges and plundered Moradabad and Sumbul. The gentlemen promised that they would cross and cantone on the other side of the Ganges during the rains, and would not return to Fyzabad or Calcutta until they had entirely driven away the Mahrattas, and fully satisfied themselves both with respect to their own and my security. But at length they left everything unfinished ; and after temporizing for a long time with the Mahrattas returned to their own homes, leaving me still a prey to the Mahrattas. You are no doubt acquainted with all these proceedings. It is a point which requires justice and consideration. As a friendship has long been established between us, I doubt not but you will at all times and on all occasions wish to preserve it. Other particulars the Major will inform you of.

The Vizier's Narrative of the Behaviour of the Rohillas.

The case of the Rohillas is as follows:—That from the beginning to this time I have treated them with friendship and attention, and on their part I have met with nothing but ill-treatment, treachery, and a breach of faith. Accordingly when the Mahrattas marched with a large army against Najib-ul-Dowla and the Rohillla Sirdars and beseiged Najib-ul-Dowla in Sukertaul, and Hafiz Rahmut, Doondee Cawn, and the rest at Jellabad, where they reduced them to the greatest straits and difficulties, if I had not assisted them, they would all have been ruined and deprived of their women, country, and government. But, by the favour of God I afforded them at that time such assistance that the Mahrattas were put to flight, and took their route to the Deccan, and the

territory, property, and women of the Rohillas remained in security. Again, the year before last, when the Mahrattas advanced their troops against the Rohillas, Zabitta Cawn received a total defeat; and Hafiz Rahmut and the others being unable to oppose them, took shelter with their women at the foot of the hills, where, if I had made 10 days' delay, they would all have perished by the bad water and unsalutary air. By the favour of the Almighty I went with the English troops to Shahabad and stopped the approach of the Mahrattas, and sometimes using authority and menaces, and sometimes friendly mediation and temporizing, according to the circumstances, I caused them to pass the Ganges; and releasing from confinement delivered to Zabitta Cawn the daughter of Ally Mahomed Cawn, a principal Chief of the Rohillas, and nine of the women and daughters of Najib-ul-Dowla and the wife and son of Zabitta Cawn, together with 400 women the Mahrattas had taken prisoners. I also called to me Hafiz Rahmut Cawn and the others who had taken protection under the hills, and replaced them on their former footing in the possession of their country. My friend General Barker is well acquainted with these circumstances, in whose presence they entered into an engagement for the payment of 40 lacs of rupees, and pledged their faith and religion for its performance. In the sequel they did not remain steady to this agreement, but in the height of the rains, antecedent to every other person, Zabitta Cawn first went and connected himself with the Mahrattas, and Hafiz Rahmut Cawn sent the holy Coran, which contains the religion of the Mussalmen, to the Mahrattas as a token of his friendship. He also gave them five lacs of rupees and established a friendship and good understanding with them. The whole world are well acquainted that envoys from Hafiz Rahmut were with the Mahrattas,

and treated with them in the above manner. Myself, continuing firm and steady to my engagements, I proceeded in concert with the English troops from Fyzabad to the assistance of the Rohillas and arrived by successive marches to Ramgaut. I previously acquainted Hafiz Rahmut Cawn that he should make preparation, and that I should shortly arrive and act in conjunction with him. As Hafiz Rahmut Cawn had entered into intrigues with the Mahrattas, notwithstanding I was near him, and the Mahrattas at a considerable distance, he nevertheless under various pretensions and evasions drew near the Mahratta army to such a degree that the morning when I arrived with the English forces, and came upon the Mahrattas, Hafiz Rahmut Cawn was within 7 or 8 coss of them, when from necessity only he came and waited on me. I am certain that if I had been 4 gurries later with the English forces, he would have joined the Mahrattas and fallen upon me; and that only from my near approach he was compelled to come to me. Afterwards when the Mahrattas could not face the English forces and myself, and set out for the Deccan, Hafiz Rahmut Cawn did not pay me a single daam on account of the agreement executed in presence of the General as aforementioned, nor did he treat me with that respect, or present me with the customary presents, which are used amongst mankind as marks of friendship and hospitality. The heavy burthen of increased expense which I have sustained, both on account of my own troops and those of the English, are as evident as the sun at noon-day. I made no use of menaces concerning taking the money by force, otherwise, had I been so inclined, I could have taken it in the space of a day. I passed the matter over and took no notice of it, and on their part pleaded excuses, evasions, and delays. They even encamped at 3 or 4 coss distance

from mine and the English army, with an intention to come to a battle should I insist on the payment of the money. Of the truth of this every gentleman that was with me can witness. My mentioning it is unnecessary. In short, the Rohillas have been guilty of treachery, baseness, and a breach of faith, and have paid no regard either to their oaths or agreements. I have notwithstanding hitherto put up with this behaviour, but can do it no longer. To oblige them to make reparation is expedient and just.

(A true translation.)

WILLIAM REDFEARN,

Persian Translator.

APPENDIX II.

The following letter is not in the Foreign Office Records but is printed in the Minutes of the Evidence taken before the House of Commons.

Then the following extract of a letter to the witness, dated Fort William, 1st July 1774, signed Warren Hastings, W. Alderfey, P. M. Dacres, and entered in No. 27 of the Appendix to the said report, was read to the witness, *viz.*:—

'The intemperate and tyrannical conduct of the Vizier after his conquests, as you have represented, cannot fail to prove highly dissatisfactory to us; and although we do not regard ourselves either as answerable for his actions, or obliged absolutely to interfere for restraining them, yet we should have been glad to have been furnished with such materials as would enable us, upon good grounds, to expostulate with him on the injustice and impropriety of such a conduct. It was in this view that we requested you to acquaint us with the instances of his cruelties; but we confess ourselves exceedingly disappointed, in receiving instead of a precise account of facts, only three letters of loose declamation, which, however, pathetically written, contain not one single instance of the Vizier's particular cruelty towards the family of Hafiz; and indeed express only such sentiments as we can easily conceive to exist in the breasts of that unfortunate family from reflecting on the sad reverse of their fortune alone without supposing any peculiar hardship in their case, or uncommon act of oppression in the Vizier: for this reason, we repeat our desire to be furnished with a particular account of the treatment

which the family of Hafiz Rhamet has received, and we shall then take such steps for their relief as the circumstances shall require. In the meantime, we hope that the remonstrances which the President informs us he has directed the Resident to make to the Vizier, on this subject, will be sufficient to render any more direct interposition needless.

Then the witness (Colonel Champion) was asked :—

Did you receive a letter from the Governor and Select Committee, of the 1st July 1774, containing that paragraph ?

I believe I did.

Whether you in answer to that letter, sent any such particular account, as was desired by the Governor and Select Committee, of the treatment which the family of Hafiz Rhamet had received ?

In answer to that question, I must observe that repeatedly before the date of that letter and afterwards, I thought the remonstrances I made were sufficient, and therefore did not comply with the orders I received.

Whether the Rohilla nation consists of Mahometans or Hindoos ?

I believe they are Hindoos.

Were they who cultivated the lands driven outof the country, or allowed to remain in it ?

To the best of my remembrance, they were allowed to remain in it.

Were the Military part of the nation, excepting those who fell in battle, put to death, or only required to cross the Ganges ?

To the best of my remembrance, they were required only to cross the Ganges.

Lieutenant-Colonel Leslie called in, and the questions above entered being entered, he replies as follows, *viz.* :—

(*1st*) I would beg leave to distinguish between the real inhabitants and the acquired ones. By the acquired ones I mean the Rohillas or Afghans, who conquered the country and became the masters of it. I believe the Gentoo inhabitants were not oppressed, the ryots have been much cherished by him as they ever were under any former government, except at the time of the march of the army through their country, but that they returned to their plough immediately and seemed to be as happy as ever.

(*2nd*) The day before our march from Shawabad the country upon the opposite side of the river Gurrah was in flames, and upon my enquiry into the matter I learned it was by order of the Vizier that he had sent several detachments of his light-cavalry for that purpose, but I believe the inhabitants of those villages had withdrawn themselves from them and taken sanctuary at Shawjehanpore.

(*3rd*) I have already explained this: the Rohillas were the conquerors of the country, and a very different people from the native inhabitants, the Rohillas being Mussulmen and the native Hindus.

(*4th*) The native inhabitants, after I left Bissouly between that and Simbu, were all at their habitations and had returned to their cultivations of the country. When I went down towards the banks of the Ganges it was highly cultivated, but about Puttergur, which was the place of arms and retreat of the Rohillas before they retired to Loll Dong as their last resource, there was no cultivation but of sugar.

(*5th*) I protest I have heard a great deal of severity exercised on the families of the Chiefs of the Rohillas, but I cannot positively speak to any of them but from hearsay. I am afraid there was too much reason to give the world a liberty to say that they were ill-treated. There was one instance in which I thought it was necessary that I should interpose. I had been sent into Pellybeet, where the wife and family of Hafiz Rhamut were, and after a series of conversation with his sons, at which Major Hannay and Mr. Murray were present, I had a message from the Begum to request that I would speak to her. I returned for answer that I was sorry it was out of my power, as my conduct was prescribed to me, but that I would receive my

message she would send to me. She sent her son in return to acquaint me that the business he wanted to speak to me on was to beg that I would intercede with Colonel Champion to protect her from any insult which might be offered her by the Vizier. In consequence of her request I went to Colonel Champion, and begged that he would give every sanction in his power and address the Vizier upon the occasion which the Colonel promised to do. This is the only occasion I had to apply to Colonel Champion on the subject. I hear that many others did exist. I have heard a great deal reported of this kind. I believe a great deal of it, and had reason to disbelieve a great deal, as the reports were so improbable I did not give ear to them. The message from the Begum mentioned no instance of severity or ill-treatment to her. At that time there would nothing have happened, as it was the very day we marched to Pellybeet.

(*6th*) Those are the.....vague reports which I wished in general to inform you of, but indeed there were particular ones which were attended with such circustances that I could scarce give any credit to from the situation of the parties. There was a particular one at Bissouly, one of the daughters of the Rohilla Chief of that place, whom they said he had committed violence upon, and that she in consequence poisoned

herself, and knowing the situation of the Vizier at that time, I thought it almost impracticable which made me to give very little credit to the stories, which I heard at the time, of such a nature.

(*7th*) Upon my word, so little as I am acquainted with those points, I can't possibly give an opinion, but upon conjecture, and which every other person is fully as capable of as myself. But from the general character of this race of people, who took possession of that country from the native inhabitants, they made them till their ground, left them a subsistence, and kept the rest for themselves. I can't tell what their conduct was to their conquered enemies, as they conquered none within my knowledge of them, except the inhabitants of that country, whom, as I mentioned before, they kept in subjection.

(*8th*) The Ganges running through the Rohilla country becomes at this time of the year, I believe in some places, fordable, and continues so till the end of March or beginning of April, at which time the snow melting upon the adjacent mountains swells the river, and it is not passable but by boats. There are several forts from Hardwagaut to Ramgaut; they are all defensible, as is the country all down that side of the river, having in general very high banks; the opposite side is quite flat, and is universally known to

people in the neighbourhood, because there is a continual intercourse between the countries on both sides of the river.

(*9th*) I don't believe if our army was posted there that the Mahrattas durst make an attempt to enter in by any part of that river, or any other power of Indostan. I mean by our army the brigade that was stationed there. If they did, it is very clear they might make a retreat, as our army could not come up with cavalry. If they should cross the river, it must be with their horses only; they could not have any equipage, appointments or subsistence, and it must be merely for a day, as they could not bring any appointments or subsistence along with them.

(*10th*) I can't possibly say with regard to the amount of the sum the Vizier possessed himself of, but report, I believe, made it a great deal more than it really was, though I am convinced it amounted to a very considerable sum; report made it from 1,.2 to 3 millions of money. I believe the principal articles of it to have consisted in bullion and specie. There were a number of camels and elephants, but these were very inconsiderable in comparison with the former.

The General (Clavering) now begs leave to propose some questions to Colonel Leslie:—

Q.—I observe that you mentioned in reply to the first question that the Vizier behaved well to the

ancient inhabitants, and I now desire to know how they behaved to the Rohillas?

A.—The prisoners who fell into the hands of the Vizier, which I believe to be very few, are now entertained in his service; there are some of the sons of Hafiz Rhanut, two particularly, whom I know and have often seen riding in his suit. He generally took one of these out with them all the time he was at Bissouly; their appearance was good, and I think the same as the rest of his cavalry, and they appeared contented, but no doubt he kept a watchful eye upon them.

Q.—Are there any fords lower than Ramgant on the Ganges?

A.—I am satisfied there are several fords between Ramgaut and Illahabad. I have crossed at Illahabad frequently myself.

Question from the Governor (Mr. Hastings)—

Q.—What is the general breadth of the river from Hardwa to the southern extremity of the Rohilla country?

A.—I did not come down by river, but from Hardwa to Weynagaut (about 12 coss) the river appeared to be about as broad as at Calcutta. At Ramgaut it is broader, and thence continues all the way downwards the same way and size as down Bahar, and interrupted by sands and islands. By the river I mean the body of water which, when I saw it, was about as broad as it is here.

Question by the General—

Q.—What is the distance from Shawbad, the frontier of the province of Oude to Lall Dong, the extremity of the Rohilla country?

A.—I believe it to be about two hundred miles.

Q.—Do you know the latitude of Lall Dong?

A.—The latitude I think is 30 degrees 48 minutes north.

Q.—How far do you reckon it to be from Lall Dong to Delhy?

A.—Delhy, I believe, is in 28.

Q.—Whilst the army was in the Rohilla country could it have prevented a Mahratta army entering the province of Bahar?

A.—The Mahrattas might have entered the province of Bahar by many inroads, as the brigade was at too great a distance to prevent them.

Q.—If a Mahratta army had entered the province of Bahar at that time do you know of any troops that could have opposed their coming to Cassembazar?

A.—If they made their entrance by the province of Corah, I really don't know what disposition the Vizier had made of his troops to oppose their passage. If they had come further down the country, I don't know of any troops nearer than Barrampore, nor what disposition Governor Hastings had made to oppose their passage to Cassembazar. Certainly, if the Vizier had not made a proper disposition to

his troops in the lower country, they could have penetrated as far as Cassembazar.

Questions by the Governor—

Q.—Did you hear of any Mahratta troops being in the country or near it, or expected there at the time our troops entered it?

A.—After our retreat to winter quarters there was a report that Fyzulla Cawn waited a junction of the Mahratta force and expected a considerable number of Mahratta troops, with whose aid he intended to take the field again, and I think the time he expected them to come was about the time that the river would become fordable, but the report lost its credit immediately from the divisions that existed among the Mahratta Chiefs.

Q.—Did the army consider the war in which they were engaged as one that did honour to the British name or such as disgraced it?

A.—I cannot answer for the opinion of others upon this subject, I can only answer for my own.

Q.—Who provided the contingencies of the army?

A.—The Commissary General. At the beginning of the campaign they were supplied by the Paymaster until the arrival of the Commissary General's Deputy.

Q.—Did you ever know in any army that the person who provided the contingencies had the control of them?

A.—There were many controls upon the persons who supplied the armies I have served in, but I do not recollect any agent of supplies controlling his own accounts.

Q.—Had you any map of the Rohilla country furnished by the Governor when you went to the army?

A.—No, I believe there were very few extant. I applied to the Governor for such as he had of the upper country, *i.e.*, of the upper parts of Bahar and province of Oudh, and he informed me the only one he had, he had promised to Captain Toone.

Q.—Do you know if Colonel Champion was furnished with maps of the country?

A.—I believe he had some maps of the country. I have seen scraps of them, but he did not communicate them to me.

Questions by Mr. Francis—

Q.—How long since the Rohillas have been established in that country?

A.—About fifty years.

Q.—When you were sent into Pellybeet did the Begum send the trinkets and ornaments of the women to you, desiring your acceptance of them, and what answer did you send her?

A.—The Begum did send her trinkets and ornaments. When Major Hannay and Mr. Murray and I were sent to Pellybeet we went as three Commissioners, in conjunction with three of the Viziers, to examine the treasury and search for military chests

of the beaten army. We searched the treasury and every other place, but the zenanas which we were forbid to enter. The women of the zenana sent their trinkets from a supposition that they were a part of the treasure, which we returned to them, acquainting them that we did not come in search of their trinkets, but for the treasure deposited there.

Q.—Did the Vizier afterwards take away more trinkets and ornaments from the women?

A.—I believe he did. I am pretty sure he did take them away the next day.

Q.—Was it the enormity of the reports circulated concerning the Vizier's conduct to the families of the Rohilla Chiefs which made you think them improbable?

A.—No, it was not; they were the circumstances of the reports.

Q.—Is not the Vizier, notwithstanding the unhappy state of his health, notoriously addicted to women, and accustomed to gratify the sudden impulse of his passions at any rate?

A.—I believe he is as addicted to women as most people, and that he would go as far to gratify them.

Question by the Governor—

Q.—Was he at this time in a condition to gratify his passions?

A.—From the accounts I had of him I don't think he was.

Questions by Mr. Francis—

Q.—Do you believe the Vizier ever entered the zenanas of any of the Rohilla Chiefs?

A.—I don't know. I believe he did.

Q.—Is not the family of a noble Moor dishonoured by a man's forcibly entering the zenana and seeing the women?

A.—Yes, I believe it is.

Q.—Were you employed in our army in the year 1773, when it acted in defence of the Rohillas against the Mahrattas?

A.—No.

Q.—Did the Vizier make any suitable allowance for the maintenance of the families of the conquered Chiefs, or were they abandoned to distress and misery, for want of the common necessaries of life, at any time?

A.—The Vizier has, I am told, settled allowances (Jaghiers), upon most of them, but I believe not sufficient to keep them in that way of life they are brought up in, but upon my word I don't know what distresses they have been brought to, as they are confined within forts, but the report of the world says they suffered great distress.

Q.—Did the Vizier make use of any, and what contrivances to possess himself of all the treasure in the treasuries of the chief towns to the exclusion of the English troops?

A.—The Vizier took all the treasure he could find in the towns without regard to the Company's troops.

Q.—Was it the English troops or those of the Vizier which conquered the Rohilla country?

A.—I believe the Company's troops were the principal of the conquest, and I am sure they were.

Q.—Is the Vizier able to defend and secure his new conquest without the constant presence of our brigade in the Rohilla country?

A.—If you confine it merely to that, his own troops will be sufficient to defend it.

Q.—How far is Ramgaut from the frontiers of Oude?

A.—About 70 or 80 English miles.

Q.—When you were sent to join the brigade were you informed of the object of the expedition, that is, whether it was to invade or to defend the Rohillas?

A.—I knew it was ordered to join the 2nd brigade and Sujah-ul-Dowlah's army, but I did not know the nature of the service in which I was to be employed.

Q.—Was it commonly said or believed in the country that the Rohillas had been sacrificed to the Vizier by the English Government?

A.—No, I never heard it, but the Rohillas said if we had not been in conjunction with Sujah-ul-Dowlah, they would have been an equal match for him, and it was owing to the power of the English troops that he conquered them.

Questions by the General—

Q.—Were the Rohilla Chiefs, who you said were now confined, taken in battle, or did they surrender themselves by capitulation?

A.—They surrendered at discretion.

Q.—How long do you suppose the army would be on marching from Lall Dong to Calcutta?

A.—Near three months, two at least.

Colonel Leslie desires time to consider further on this last question, and as it becomes a part of his duty, he will do it with the greatest exactness.

The Governor desires to add this question for Colonel Leslie's consideration.

In what time he imagines a whole brigade, or part of it, would be able upon an emergency to come to Calcutta by water at the different seasons of the year, and Colonel Leslie is desired to consider this question in its full extent.

Major Hannay called in—

To the first question.—To the best of my knowledge, I saw no signs of oppression to the inhabitants of the new conquered country, but from particular enquiries which I had an opportunity of making of the country people they said they had met with no treatment that they could complain of; that from the treatment they had met with they had no reason to fear greater severity from the Vizier than their former masters.

To the second question.—I believe both the Vizier and the Rohillas were concerned in burning the villages. I was informed that some days before our arrival at Shawbad the

Rohillas had burned some villages towards Mamy in the Vizier's ancient dominions.

To the third question.—I have learned from many people that it is only within 50 years that the Rohillas have become masters of the country to the north of the Ganges; that they were originally Afghans, came to Indostan under a Sirdar named Daud Cawn, and that they conquered that country from the Hindoos, and that since that time they have followed no other profession than that of arms, and the ancient Hindoos have cultivated the country; the Rohillas are Mussulmen of the sect of Omah, and that the cultivators of the country are Hindoos. I suppose the proportion to be about 9 Hindoos to 1 Mussulman.

To the fourth question.—Several of the native inhabitants of course had followed the Rohillas to Pattergur and Lall Dong, but the proportion of them was very small and several of them to my knowledge returned, before the war was finished, to their former habitations. At the time that I went upon an expedition from Bissouly to Sumbul, Moradabad and Rampore, the country appeared to be in good cultivation—the inhabitants were employed in tilling it It is in general one of the best cultivated countries I have seen in Indostan, and very well inhabited, and the people appeared to be as busy at this time as if there had been a profound peace, and under no kind of apprehension from the conquerors. At or some time after the battle of St. George, Engee Cawn was returning from Delhy to join his master the Vizier, and had taken possession of all the country from Anopshare and Ramgaut to Rampore, and established Fousdars and Collectors of the revenues of it before the arrival of our army at Bissouly; and to maintain

these Fousdars in the execution of their duty it was only necessary to leave 500 Nudjiff Cawns there and 5 companies of regular sepoys and some hundreds of the Burrah Fultan, in all not amounting to 1,500 men, who kept the country in perfect quietness until our army arrived and after the march of our army to Puttergur.

To the fifth question.—I was generally informed, and from my own observations I am led to believe, that he treated them with a great deal of severity, for instance, he deprived them of all the ornamental part of their dress, and did not provide them with such accommodations as I thought their rank entitled them to expect. The reports that prevailed in camp were various, but were not conveyed to me from such authority as to warrant my offering them to the Board.

Mr. Francis begs leave to propose the following question in this place, as it has immediate relation to the last.

Q.—Do you know, or have you heard, whether they were at any time reduced to distress for want even of a subsistence?

A.—I have heard that their subsistence was scanty, but this is one of the reports I have heard and have not been able to ascertain the truth of to my own satisfaction.

To the sixth question—I have heard, while I was at Bissouly frequently, that he had violated one of the daughters of Mohboola Cawn, but I never gave credit to it: nay I believe it impossible from the state of health he was in at that time. I may say further that when I heard this report I was at a good deal of pains to investigate the truth of it, and tracing

it back I could carry it no further than it was a report that prevailed among the guard at the door of the zenana, and from the situation of this guard to the zenana it was impossible they could be acquainted with any circumstances that past within, as the apartments of the women were at such a distance from the gateway where the guards were placed. There was another motive which induced me to disbelieve the report, which was that a few days after this happened the women were carried to camp, where he would have a much better opportunity of doing it, without detection, had he been disposed to it or able.

Question by Mr. Francis—

Q.—Do you know or believe that the Vizier entered the zenanas of the wives of any of the Rohilla Chiefs?

A.—It is impossible for me to answer, with any degree of precision, for the zenanas being spacious places, consisting of many apartments, many of which are not occupied by women. I never knew of his going into any of them at Pellybeet. I can positively say he did not, for he never went into the town of Pellybeet. At Bissouly I have heard that he went frequently into the zenana there, but to the best of my remembrance it was after the women were removed to camp, and that he was fitting up the zenana for the reception of his own family, during the time he was going to Puttergur.

To the seventh question.—Their national character has in general been the want of sincerity, to elucidate which I

beg leave to mention one instance. At the time that Mahomed Ally was their Chief, he prevailed upon the Almora Raja and the other hill Rajas to assist him in his rebellion against the King Mahomed Shaw; that they did assist him with 20,000 men; that upon the approach of the imperial army they found themselves so much inferior in point of strength that they judged it imprudent to give him battle, and prevailed upon the Almorah Raja to admit them into his country the access to which is so strong that a small number of troops may defend the pass against a very numerous army. They continued there till an invasion of the Mahratta required that the army of the Empire should be returned against them. As soon as ever the army of the Empire quitted the Rohilla country, then the Rohillas seized the country of the Almorah Raja, their ally carried most of the handsomest women of the country captives, among others the daughter of the Raja whom Ally Mahomed took himself, and she was the mother of the present Fyzulla Cawn. This is mentioned as an instance of their insincerity; further, it is a proverb in Indostan that they pray with one hand and rob with the other. Their manner of making war is much the same as is practised all over Indostan; towards their conquered enemies they have generally been bloody; those whom they have saved, they commonly made captives of. and in the late campaign I have been very well assured by many of the prisoners that their intention towards us were very bloody, that they had orders to give no quarters.

To the eighth question.—I have never understood that it was fordable at any place below Anopshuri, and I have taken great pain to make myself acquainted with your subject by enquiries of Nudjiff Cawn, and, after the war was

finished, of many of the Rohillas. I have understood that it is easy forded at no place, but in the month of March and beginning of April it may be forded at several places between Hardwa and Anopshuri, but it is not fordable long after that period on account of the meeting of the snows and rising of the rivers. I have been told by Nudjiff Cawn that he was astonished at the Rohillas suffering the Mahrattas to cross the Ganges when he invaded the country of Zabita Cawn to the mouths of the Ganges, as he assured me that every one of the fords might easily have been defended. I was with the Vizier a few days after they had crossed the Ganges, and he blamed the Sirdars very much for suffering them, using this expression, "He was sure Zabita Cawn was not the son of old Nazim O'Dowlah, or he would not have suffered them to cross the Ganges." It is the general opinion of all the Indostan soldiers with whom I have talked on the subject that the Ganges is not to be forded but by surprise; the fords are very well known.

To the ninth question.—I think it would be so dangerous an enterprize that they would hardly undertake it; and if they did in case of a defeat, they would be totally ruined, having but a small tract of country to march over before they came to the Ganges, and if a victorions army pursued them closely, they must either perish in it or fall by the sword.

To the tenth question—I believe it impossible to ascertain what the sum is, but it is generally supposed, and I do verily believe, to have been considerable, consisting chiefly in specie, plates, and jewels; by considerable I mean upwards of a crore of rupees. This is my opinion; others have estimated the sum at a great deal more.

To the eleventh question.—I recollect to have learnt from Sir Robert Barker that when he marched up to Ramgaut with the Viziers to the assistance of the Rohillas, and had come near to the Mahratta army, their conduct was so doubtful and had so much the appearance of treachery, that he had come to a resolution of attacking them if they did not fully declare themselves by their actions; and to the best of my remembrance he would have done it, but that he was misled by a guide. But this is a question which Colonel Champion or Colonel Goddard can better reply to, as they were present; I was not, but only heard it from General Sir Robert Barker.

Questions by the General—

Q.—Do you know who has the commission to receive Nudjiff Cawn's pension which is to be paid by this Presidency?

A.—It is a question I cannot well reply to. I know whom he intended to appoint his agent, but the confirmation of the appointment I understood depended on the Governor.

Q.—Who was the person intended with the Government approbation?

A.—I was.

Q.—What were you to receive for it?

Major Hannay ordered to withdraw.

The Governor General observes that the questions which he proposed, and which were assented to by the Board, related only to the Rohilla war, but the questions now put by the General tend to reveal some transaction of Major Hannay himself, which, if of a private and lawful nature, the Board have

no right to enquire into, and if of an unlawful nature, they ought not to be put to Major Hannay himself; he therefore objects to this question being put.

Mr. Francis.—I think the question proper and necessary, and that the Board have a right to make the enquiry. I cannot suppose that Major Hannay has done anything criminal in this business, because the intended appointment was to have the sanction of the Governor, and had been communicated to him by the Commander-in-Chief of the Army.

Mr. Barwell thinks the question improper; it has no public object, and therefore objects to it. Mr. Monson sees no impropriety in putting the question to Major Hannay, as he understands that these gentlemen were called before the Board to give the most ample information, and cannot suppose that there was anything improper in the appointment of Major Hannay to be Agent to Nudjiff Cawn, as it was to receive the Governor's sanction.

Resolved, that the question be put.

Major Hannay called in again and the question put to him.

A.—I have long known Nudjiff Cawn; he is a man for whom I entertain a friendship, and should embrace any consistent opportunity to testify my friendship to him. I wish to explain what I mean by the Governor's confirmation of his intention of appointing me his Agent. I thought it was improper to accept of that appointment without having first applied for and obtained leave from the Commander-in Chief and the Governor, not thinking myself an adequate judge how far it was proper for me to undertake such an office.

Question by the Governor—

Q.—I desire Major Hannay may inform the Board what answer he received from me, either directed to himself or the Commander-in-Chief?

A.—I don't positively recollect what the answer was, but I think it was that there was no money due at that time to Nudjiff Cawn, but when the Governor should be acquainted with the pleasure of the Court of Directors, he would then determine whether the Jaghier was to be paid, and in the meantime it was needless to confirm an appointment which might never be exercised.

Questions by the General—

Q.—Do you not know that Colonel Champion made representations to the Vizier of cruelties exercised by his troops in the Rohilla country?

A.—I have heard Colonel Champion say that he had remonstrated to the Vizier against the burning of any villages, but I was not present at any such remonstrance. I further heard him say that he had used his offices with the Vizier to persuade him to treat the captive families of the Rohilla Chiefs with more humanity and tenderness, and that upon these occasions the Vizier denied having treated them with severity.

Q.—Do you imagine that Colonel Champion would have made such representations to the Vizier if he had not been persuaded that the facts were true?

A.—The burning of the villages was evident, and I can say with confidence that Colonel Champion would

not have made application to the Vizier for the remedy of evils which he did not believe to exist.

Q.—Whether you don't think that the Commander of the army was in a situation to be better informed of transactions of that nature than yourself?

A.—With respect to the burning of the villages and matters of that nature, with all deference to the Commander-in-Chief, I humbly conceive that I had a good opportunity of being acquainted as any one. With respect to the treatment of the captive families, I conceive he must have had better opportunities of information than me, as he might have received letters from them on the subject, which I did not.

Q.—Whether you imagine that the army, whilst it was in the Rohilla country, could have prevented the Mahrattas from entering the Behar province by the country of Corah?

A.—I understand that the Mahrattas must come into the Corah country by the Culpee Ghaut, and as their march from their own country to Culpee is a very considerable greater distance than our army would have had time enough to oppose their passage of the Jumna.

Q.—Was the brigade complete when it entered the field, particularly the Europeans?

A.—Not quite complete.

Q.—How was it by the last returns you have seen?

A.—Not quite complete.

Q.—How many men did the European battalion want?

A.—I will send a particular account to-morrow from the latest returns I have seen.

Q.—What troops had you belonging to the Company and the brigade establishment?

A.—The latter part of the campaign, the troop of cavalry; we had also two companies of Grenadier sepoys from the 3rd Brigade.

Q.—Whether the cadets form part of the effective strength of the 2nd Regiment or not?

A.—It was only in October last that they joined the regiment. They did duty before with the sepoy grenadier corps; they are not included in the establishment.

Q.—Who supplied the contingencies of the army?

A.—At the beginning of the campaign they were furnished by the Paymaster, but latterly by the Commissary General.

Q.—Is it usual for the same person to supply contingencies and to control the account of them?

A.—I don't recollect any instances of it in Europe.

Questions by Colonel Monson—

Q.—What induced the Vizier to enter the zenana at Bissouly after the women had been removed from it?

A.—To look for treasure was his first motive, and to set up the zenana for his own women was his secondary.

Q.—When you went as an Agent in behalf of the army into the Fort of Pillybeet to look for treasure, were you precluded from going into the zenana?

A.—I was.

Q.—Do you imagine if you had been allowed to have gone into the zenana, you would have found treasure?

A.—I do imagine I should have found some as I was informed by a son of Hafiz Rhamut Khan that there were some thousands rupees there. I think about 10,000.

Questions by Mr. Francis—

Q.—Do you conceive the country of the Rohillas to be completely and quietly reduced to the Vizier's subjection?

A.—I do.

Q.—Do you apprehend that it is necessary for the English troops to remain there, in order to secure and establish the Vizier's Government over his new subjects?

A.—I do not consider it as absolutely necessary that they should continue in that country, but it would be of great advantage to the Vizier's affairs, that they should be in some part of the Province of Oudh, the nearer the frontiers, the more it would contribute to the Vizier's advantage.

Question by the Governor—

Q.—Do you imagine that the possession of the Rohilla country would be at this time in danger by the opinion that it might be invaded without any interruption or opposition from the English brigade?

A.—The unsettled situation of the Pattans and the Rohillas that were made to cross the Ganges into the Duabe, makes me believe that if the brigade were withdrawn and they were thoroughly convinced that the Vizier would not be supported in that conquest, they would endeavour to wrest it from him.

Questions by Colonel Monson—

Q.—Do you know the bundebust that the Vizier has settled for the whole of the Rohilla country?

A.—No, I do not.

Q.—What is the reported revenue of the Rohilla country?

A.—Upwards of 70 lacs.

Q.—You said that several of the prisoners had informed you that they intended to give us no quarter; do you not think it natural that they should form such a resolution against a nation which, without any provocation, invaded their country with an avowed design to conquer it for a prince, whom in their corruption the Rohillas particularly feared and detested?

A.—Under such circumstances as here represented I should regard it by no means an unnatural resolution for the Rohillas to have come to, but I understood that they never accused us of entering their country without provocation, and what I understood from them to have been the provocation that brought us into their country, was their not having fulfilled their engagement they had enter-

ed into with the Vizier to pay him 40 lacs of rupees, nor did I understand that the conquest of the country was meditated, if they should have paid the treaty money and the expenses of the war.

The Board having no further questions to put to Major Hannay, he is desired to withdraw.

Fort William, the 28th December 1774.

AT A COUNCIL PRESENT:

Secret Department.—The Hon'ble Warren Hastings, Governor General, President.

Wednesday.—Lieutenant-General John Clavering, the Hon'ble George Monson, Richard Barwell, Esq., Phillip Francis, Esq.

The Consultation of the 21st read and approved, Colonel Champion having sent in the following letter which is now read.

Hon'ble Sir and Sirs,—Last night I, Colonel Champion, received your favor of the 19th and have to wish that Mr. Hastings' consciousness of the credit due to his conduct, to his sentiments and to his manner of communicating them, had been sufficient to have prevented the possibility of his receiving the sense of my address of that date in the manner he appears to have done.

I gave myself the liberty of supposing he had declined producing the correspondence from regard to ordinary politeness, in consideration of many of the letters having been addressed familiarly, and by the reference made to him I meant no more than a return of the like complement; but

although I have already waived every other objection, he was pleased to insist on making the reference on his part a matter of tenderness towards me. Under such a construction I cannot think of withholding the letters, and unequal as I acknowledge myself to Mr. Hastings in the talent of writing, I shall let my sentiment and conduct speak for themselves without seeking to anticipate opinions.

When, for the reasons assigned in my letter, I requested the favor of a previous perusal of your questions regarding the Rohilla war, I always understood that I was to give the answers verbally, because I know the effects of one question frequently produces another. My complaints are now less painful though my health is far from being re-established, but I am so much recovered that I shall with pleasure wait upon you whenever it may suit your conveniency.

I have the honour to be,

SIR,

Your most obedient Servant,

A. CHAMPION.

The 21st December 1774.

Colonel Champion called in and examined in the Rohilla War.

Colonel Champion, in compliance with a summons now attending, is called in and the Governor General's questions of the 19th instant being put to him, he replies to them severally as follows:—

To the first question.—It appeared so to me.

To the second question.—The Vizier.

To the third question.—The Rohillas are in possession of it as conquerors only, the Native inhabitants are not of the same sect or religion.

To the fourth question.—The Native inhabitants are still remaining, and the country is in a flourishing state.

To the fifth question.—It appeared to me that he was guilty of cruelties to the families of the Rohilla Chiefs, but as to the instance I must refer to my minute.

To the sixth question.—I did hear such a report, but as to the grounds I have none sufficient to prove the accusation, but the report of it was made to me.

To the seventh question.—They are a brave race of people, they make wars as the Indians generally do. I have no particular accounts of their conduct to their conquered enemies.

To the eighth question.—The Ganges is fordable in many places, I believe in April, May and part of June. I have little knowledge of the fords, but I believe they may be defensible by a European force, but not by the country powers. I believe they are universally known. Rynegaut is one, Ramgaut is another, and there are two other places the names of which I do not know.

To the ninth question.—If our army was upon the spot, I don't think they would venture to cross, but if the army was at a distance of 100 coss. I believe, they would venture, and with our army pursuing them, I think they would recross themselves but not with safety to their baggage.

To the tenth question.—I have heard (have an account), but that account was given me by Hircarrahs that the amount of the plunder was about 1½ crores of rupees, and I believe

that the amount was a crore and a half of rupees; it consisted in gold, silver, and jewels.

To the eleventh question.—I cannot charge my memory with anything of that sort.

Questions by the Governor General—

Q.—Do you know whether the Vizier received any letters from Hafiz Rahmet Khan and the other Rohilla Chiefs, under their respective seals, about the time of the commencement of the campaign?

A.—To the best of my recollection he did.

Q.—Did you receive such a letter from the Rohilla Chiefs at the same time?

A.—I think I did.

Q.—What was the purport of them?

A.—To the best of my recollection they were affording an accommodation.

Q.—What opinion did the Vizier express upon the offer?

A.—That he would hear of no accommodation.

Q.—Do you recollect whether the letter expressed anything like an acknowledgment of a breach of treaty committed by the Rohillas?

A.—I don't recollect.

[The Colonel is requested to lay before the Board a copy of the letter addressed to him by the Rohilla Chiefs, with his answer to it.]

Questions by the General—

Q.—When did you receive your instructions?

A.—About the 19th or 20th of February, in Calcutta.

Q.—Was any mention made in those instructions of the object of the Rohilla War?

A.—I think there was.

Q.—Was any previous intimation made to the Rohillas that the Government had taken offence at any part of their conduct?

A.—I don't recollect that there was.

Q.—Do you believe that you should have remembered it, had such an intimation been made by yourself?

A.—Certainly.

Q.—When the Vizier began plundering and burning the country, did you make any representations to him upon it?

A.—I did.

Q.—Did you represent to the Vizier your opinion of the ill-treatment of the prisoners?

A.—I did.

Q.—Were not some of the families of the Chiefs left destitute of necessaries for their subsistence?

A.—No.

Q.—In what way were they ill-treated?

A.—It was reported to me that they were in want.

Q.—Did you inform the Governor, Mr. Hastings, of the Vizier's conduct towards the country and the prisoners?

A.—I did.

Q.—How did the Governor take your representations?

A—To the best of my recollection, he wrote to the Vizier to be more moderate in his behaviour.

Q.—Did the Governor seem to be pleased at your making this representation to him?

A.—I refer to the Governor's letter written in answer.

Q.—When you expostulated with the Governor on the disgrace and dishonor which this war brought on the British arms, what answer did he make to these expostulations?

A.—I cannot charge my memory, but beg leave to refer to the correspondence.

Q.—Did you apprehend, during the campaign; that the Mahrattas would come towards the Ganges in autumn?

A.—I received some information from the Vizier that he was in expectations of it.

Q.—Whilst the army was in the heart of the Rohilla country, do you think you could have covered the province of Bengal from an invasion of the Mahrattas, had they entered by the way of Corah?

A.—I request to have this question given me in writing that I may return an answer.

Q.—Did you hear that Nudjiff Khan had engaged Sombre, Redman, and other English deserters in his service?

A.—To the best of my recollection, no.

Questions by the Governor—

Q.—What is your opinion of the character of Nadjiff Khan, and of his attachment towards us?

A.—I believe him to be a good man and firm to our interests.

Q.—Do you know how Major Polier came to be employed at the siege of Agra?

A.—No.

Q.—Do you know of any cannon or small arms sent to the Vizier?

A.—I know of some cannon, but as to small arms I can't say.

Q.—How many cannon were there, and of what sort?

A.—Four, and I believe them iron 18-prs.

Q.—How were the contingencies of the army furnished?

A.—The first part of the campaign by the Paymaster, and the latter part by the Commissary-General.

Q.—What was the cause of the change in the mode of supplying the contingencies from the Paymaster to the Commissary-General?

A.—I understood that it was by order of the Company.

Q.—Do you know nearly how many boats the Commissary-General had with stores?

A.—No.

Q.—When he sells the stores who purchases them, or makes the bargain for the Company?

A.—The stores are supplied by indent; I cannot say who makes the bargain.

Q.—Who fixes the price of the stores?

A.—I cannot say.

Q.—Who comptrolls the accounts after they are purchased?

A.—The Commissary-General.

Q.—Do you know if any lead was indented for?

A.—No, that I recollect.

Q.—When did you acquaint the Governor with having received an obligation from the Vizier for seven lacs as a present to the army?

A.—I believe it to be the 8th of August.

Q.—When did you acquaint them of your having received the obligation for 50,000 rupees?

A.—I never did mention it to the best of my knowledge.

Q.—When did you acquaint them of your having received the tuncaw for the 3 lacs?

A.—Not till I came to Calcutta.

Q.—Did you ever mention in your correspondence with the Governor that advantageous conditions might be procured for the Company by making peace with some of the Rohilla Chiefs?

A.—I did. ,,

Q.—Do you recollect what conditions might have been obtained for the Company by making peace with them?

A.—I refer to my correspondence for the particulars.

Q.—When you made the propositions to the Governor, did he not order you not to negotiate, but to pursue the war till the Rohillas were entirely conquered?

A.—I cannot charge my memory with this, but refer to my correspondence.

Questions by Mr. Francis.

Q.—Whether you have received from the Vizier any part of the 40 lacs stipulated to be paid by him to the Company on account of the Rohilla war?

A.—No.

Q.— Do you know whether he has paid any part of that sum to any person for the use of the Company?

A.—No.

Q.—What do you apprehend is the annual amount of the revenue acquired by the Vizier by the conquest of the Rohilla country?

A.—I understood it to be between 70 and 80 lacs.

Q.—Whether your letter to us, dated the 19th instant, and now shown you, communicated to the Governor General, before it was sent into the Board, and whether he made any objection to its being sent?

A.—No.

[The Governor begs leave to ask Mr. Francis, and desires he will inform the Board, why he asks this question as it is so pointed to himself.]

Mr. Francis.—I did understand that one of the letters sent in by Colonel Champion had been previously communicated to the Governor. I do still understand so from the Colonel, and I asked merely to ascertain what the letter was, and to prevent mistakes, I now beg leave to ask the Colonel whether any letter of his to the Board, since his arrival at this Presidency, was previously communicated to the Governor.

A.—The letter wherein I required my resignation was shown to the Governor.

Questions by General Clavering—

Q.—When you was ordered by the late President and Council to make your demand on the Vizier for the 40 lacs, did he acknowledge the money to be due?

A.—Yes. The first demand having been made, as the Colonel apprehends, about the middle of July.

Q.—Did you ever repeat that demand afterwards?

A.—No; to the best of my recollection, I did.

Q.—What reason did he give for not paying you?

A.—That he had no money in the field, but when he returned to Fyzabad it should be paid.

Q.—Did he not promise to pay it with the money he received from Fyzoola Khan?

A.—He did promise it.

Q.—Did he perform it?

A.—No.

The Board having no further questions to put to Colonel Champion, he is desired to withdraw, and the Secretary ordered to deliver him the question which he desired to have in writing.

The Governor-General now observes that any question must have an object, and therefore begs Mr. Francis will inform the Board what is the object of the two last questions which he asked Colonel Champion.

Mr. Francis replies.—"I asked the first of these questions for the reason I have assigned; I asked the second in consequence of the Governor's question to me, to show that I did not causelessly ask the first."

[Reconsidered the letter of Colonel Champion in continuation, 19th December.]

Agreed that he be accordingly permitted to resign the Company's service.

APPENDIX III.

Extract of Mr. Hastings' letter to the Board, dated the 27th September 1762.

"The enquiry concerning the intercepted letters having been chiefly made by me, and depending on nicer and more intricate circumstances than the former, I beg leave to lay before your Honor, &c., a recapitulation of the most material evidences which have been given upon it.

"From the examinations taken the last year it has been proved that the packet from Comgar Cawn to Rajaram, which included Ramchurn's letters, was carried from Calcutta; that the contents and superscriptions of the letter were wrote in two different hands, and that the letters were forged; by whom, remained yet undiscovered, though it could be no doubt (from the circumstances already proved) that it was the contrivance of some person of Calcutta, and who had an interest in Ramchurn's disgrace; and this was the only clue that could lead to the discovery of the author.

"That there had been a long and open variance between Nundcoomar and Ramchurn is well known. The former was, in consequence of that difference, suspected of being concerned in the forgery of the letters; with what reason will appear from the depositions now before the Board.

"From the evidences of Nubkishen, (*a*) Ramchurn Dass, (*b*) and Selim Oolla (*c*) it appears that there were designs projecting by Nundcoomar against Ramchurn a short time before the interception of the above packet. The mysterious declaration of Sudder-o-din to Selim

(*a*) *Vide* Cons. of 31st July.
(*b*) *Vide* Cons. of 11th August.
(*c*) B. No. 9.

Oolla, mentioned in the latter's deposition, affords a strong proof of this, and of Sudder-o-din being an accomplice in it. The industrious concealment of Ramnauth Chowdry, who is said to be privy to the whole transaction, though it amounts to no proof, cannot but create a suspicion that it proceeds from a consciousness of some guilt, which his presence might bring to light.

"That Sudder-o-din was acquainted with the contrivance of the letters is implied in the promise which he made to Assud Oolla, (*d*) and Fukker-o-din to declare all that he knew relating to those letters, and that he would return in five days from Gyrettee for that purpose. This Sudder-o-din positively denies, though confirmed by the evidence of Moulvie Inoodun, (*e*) who has sworn to the express words which he heard, but understood not to what subject they related.

(*d*) *Vide* Cons. of 11th August. N. B. No. 11.
(*e*) B. No. 10.

"The letter (*f*) wrote by Sudder-o-din to Assud Oolla is very ambiguous. I have consulted several able Moonshees upon it, and find it will well bear the meaning which he gives it, though it may also admit of a different construction. The letter in his sense of it is as follows:—

(*f*) *Vide* President's letter in Cons. of 31st July.

"'My present situation how shall I relate? It is beyond expression, and as I look upon you as my friend in all respects what occasion is there to write it? I am persuaded you will do whatever you think best for me. To work at the unfolding of the affair known between us would be the act of a base man, afterwards what confidence could you have in me? When I have bound myself to the rights of a master I will not be deficient in complying with your desire.'

"Two difficulties occur in reconciling Sudder-o-din's interpretation of the 'affair known between them' to the probable views and interests of the two Moonshees—

"*First.*—Fukker-o-din having wrote the superscriptions of the letters to Comgar Cawn, was charged with having written the letters also, and was several days in confinement upon that account. This made him solicitous to find out the real author, and Assud Oolla regarding it as a common concern equally interested himself in it. Accordingly, we find that they meet with Sudder-o-din (who was supposed to have written the letters) and have a long conversation with him; but strangely forgetting (as he (*g*) declares) the point which they had so intently in view, they endeavour to prevail upon him by large promises to communicate to them such intelligence as he could afterwards pick up at Gyrettee, in which it does not appear that they could have had any interest; or if they had, it is very improbable that they should make such an application to a man who had so nearly compassed the ruin of one of them, and by an act which shewed him too intimately connected with Nundcoomar to join in a scheme to betray him.

(*g*) *Vide* Cons. of 11th August.

"*Secondly.*—Sudder-o-din assures Assud Oolla of his readiness to comply with his desire when he had made it a part of his duty by procuring him the Governor's service. That Sudder-o-din should promise to reveal what he knew of transactions already passed is consistent with the explanation given by Assud Oolla of the affair known between them; but that he should promise to reveal what should afterwards pass at Gyrettee, if received in the Governor's service in Calcutta, is hardly reconcileable by the most forced construction to probability or even common sense.

"Thus far the truth of the affair can be drawn from probable but yet doubtful arguments only; what follows depends more on facts.

"Gopaul Sing, (*h*) who had despatched Ramruttun, the Cossid, to Jellasore, swears that he gave him but two letters, written both in the Nagree language, and addressed to his brother.

(*h*) B. No. 13.

"Ramruttun (*i*) confesses the same, and adds that he received the Persian Packet from Mooteeram, a *harkarra* in the service of Nundcoomar, who set out at the same time with him from Calcutta; that when he was seized by Shasteeram, Mooteeram, who was then with him, fled, and left him with the charge of that packet upon him. Being examined two or three times, and every question put to him that might lead him to contradict himself if his evidence had been false, he persisted invariably in the same story, nor could I meet with any circumstance with the depositions of the other persons concerned that disagreed with his. Upon enquiry I learn that there was such a person as Mooteeram in the service of Nundcoomar at that time, but he has not been heard of for some time, being supposed to have been cut off by robbers in the way to Moorshedabad. That he was with Ramruttun appears also from the evidence of Dootee Sooreah, (*j*) the man whose house was plundered by Ramruttun. He says that when Shasteeram asked who he (Ramruttun) was, one of the peons replied—'He is one of the two persons who joined the retinue in the plain of Soobung.' That this part of the evidence is true cannot be doubted, as it would imply a degree of art and a suddenness of invention scarce possible for a man of such ignorance and simplicity as his appearance denotes to bring in so material a

(*i*) B. No. 14.

(*j*) B. No. 5.

circumstance in answer to a question so remote from the conclusion now drawn from his words.

"Since writing the above I have met with the original deposition of Dootee Gooreah taken before Mr. Johnstone at Rajghaut, which agrees almost literally with that which he has now made. I have therefore brought it for the satisfaction of the Board.

"In the deposition of Sasteeram (*k*) there are some particulars which will admit of a very doubtful construction, such as his entertaining so sudden a suspicion of the Cossid being employed in carrying treasonable letters from no other reason yet appearing than his being detected in robbing a house (an uncommon employment at least for a man engaged in such a service); his repeated mention of the severe floggings given Ramruttun for the robbery as well as to make him confess whence he had the letters, which, by the concurrent testimony of Ramruttun himself and every person questioned upon the fact, appears to be utterly false, and that the man was not in the least ill-treated. He indeed gives a plausible reason for his suspicion, *viz.*, that one of his attendants (Khaney Sein) being shown the letters, declared one of them to be from Comgar Cawn to Rajaram. But this is likewise contradicted by the other depositions, and particularly that of Khaney Sein (*l*) himself, who declared that he was not present at the time, and only came up some hours after Ramruttun was seized and confined, and that then he was shewn the letter.

(*k*) B. No. 2.

(*l*) B. No. 2.

"From the several depositions and the circumstances herein presented the Board will judge on whom to fix the forgery of the letters in question. One observation it remains upon me to make, that a fact of this kind, in which the inter-

vention of more than one person is not immediately required, can scarce ever admit of a positive and incontestable proof, though the several consequent and relative facts may be sufficiently proved, and point out in the most evident manner the main spring which set them in motion. In this light, regarding the enquiry before us, I must give it as my opinion that as it appears pretty clearly that there was a design on foot to compass the ruin of Ramchurn, that subsequent thereto the letters forged in his name were intercepted; that the man to whose charge they were entrusted was a servant of Nundcoomar's; and that Sudder-o-din (a servant of Nundcoomar's) did foretell the disgrace of Ramchurn, and was (by his own declaration afterwards) privy to the forgery of the letters. I say from these circumstances already proved, I am of opinion that the letters were written and intercepted by the contrivance and direction of Nundcoomar, in order to fix the charge of a traitorous correspondence upon Ramchurn."

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Opinions of the Press

ON

SELECTIONS FROM THE LETTERS, DESPATCHES, AND OTHER STATE PAPERS

PRESERVED IN THE

FOREIGN DEPARTMENT OF THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA, 1772—1785.

EDITED BY

G. W. FORREST.

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"It is these proceedings that supply the vindication of the illustrious man who was so much maligned while these papers remained unpublished. He himself said that if these official documents were given to the world, his defence would be strengthened. The Directors at that time did not think it fit to grant this request. But now the work has been done, and Hastings' vindication has been made complete. Every future historian will have to take account of these volumes; and to them Professor Forrest has, as Editor, prefixed a valuable introduction, in which he clearly states the case, and refutes the charges with the aid of the documents published in the body of the work."—*Times of India.*

"Mr. G. W. Forrest has made another valuable and interesting contribution to the store of material of Indian history in the Hastings' papers, which have just been published at Calcutta by authority of the Government of India. The papers extend from 1772, the year in which Warren Hastings became Governor of Bengal, to the 1st of February 1785, the day on which he resigned the office of Governor General. They thus cover a momentous period in the history of British rule in India—a period abounding in wars and negotiations and intrigues, and in conflicts in Council more embittered even than those in the open field. Here the story of the Rohilla Campaign, which Macaulay has told with highly embellished vindictiveness, may be read in the dispassionate simplicity of original documents. More light—if more light were needed after Sir James Stephen's elaborate investigation of the whole affair—is thrown upon the story of Nundcomar and of Hastings' relation to that high-placed malefactor. Hastings' conflicts and misunderstandings with the Governments of Bombay and Madras are represented in the dry light of papers for the most part new even to the historical student. The story of the Benares rebellion, as well as that story of the Begums of Oudh upon which Burke lavished all the resources of his brilliant but cruel rhetoric, are told at length, not as lucidly perhaps as Macaulay has told them, but in a way nevertheless which carries with it all the living interest of first-hand testimony, and which will mislead no one who knows how to weigh historical evidence. They are all official papers, it is true, but all of them relate to events by which modern India has been moulded and built up, and they are

eminently readable. Of Mr. Forrest's performance of duty entrusted to him by Government, nothing but praise need be said. So far as we have seen in a necessarily rapid survey of the three volumes, the selection has been made with great care and judgment, the whole of the papers printed having a direct and important bearing upon the leading events of Hastings' administration. And there are few of them which will not make excellent reading themselves, apart from their value as *mémoires pour servir*. In an introduction of just one hundred pages Mr. Forrest surveys the whole of the field covered by his three volumes. The *Introduction* is all that it ought to be. It is a piece of clear, crisp, and concise writing, in which the Editor keeps closely to his subject, avoiding the temptation, which must often have been strong, to tell himself the story which could properly be told only by the papers with which he was dealing."—*Bombay Gazette.*

Opinions of the Press

ON

SELECTIONS FROM THE STATE PAPERS

PRESERVED IN THE

BOMBAY SECRETARIAT (HOME SERIES).

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"The two volumes now before us deal with the great Company's domestic affairs in India from 1630 to 1788, the year before Tippoo provoked the wrath of Cornwallis by his attack upon Travancore. "In the letters and narratives of the chief actors we have here related," says the able Editor, "the earliest domestic history of our Indian Empire. In these volumes we can trace the gradual change in the servants of the Company from factors to soldiers and rulers of men." They show us how the modest little factory founded at Surat in 1614 proved to be the germ of a dominion nearly as large and populous as all Europe.

In an introduction of fifty-two pages Mr. Forrest provides an excellent historical summary of the period embraced in these two volumes.

* * * * * *

The Editor's share in the production of these volumes cannot be too highly praised. * * *"—*Athenæum*, 9th June 1888.

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tions with the natives. * * * These volumes contain much new material towards the history of the East India Company which is sure to be written sooner or later, now that our latest investigations of the manuscript records still happily existing both in London and in India are establishing the incompleteness and frequent inaccuracy of the hitherto accepted standard work—Bruce's Annals. Among those who have brought this hidden wealth of knowledge to light no one deserves more credit than Mr. Forrest."—*Asiatic Quarterly Review.*

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Opinions of the Press

ON

SELECTIONS FROM THE STATE PAPERS

PRESERVED IN THE

BOMBAY SECRETARIAT (MAHRATTA SERIES).

EDITED BY

G. W. FORREST.

"In a quarto volume of more than seven hundred pages, Mr. Forrest, of the Deccan College and the Bombay University, has brought together the first fruits of his researches among the mass of records preserved in the Bombay Secretariat. By means of these records he has traced anew "the history of the Mahrattas from their founder Shivaji, who welded a few tribes into a great nation, to their defeat by the matchless genius of Wellington." The documents which form the bulk of the volume record, in fact, our dealings with the Mahrattas from 1739 to 1803—that is, from the siege of Bassein to the Battle of Assaye.

So carefully has he discharged it to the smallest detail that there is hardly a misprint noticeable in the whole volume.

In his "Short Historical Introduction" of thirty-four quarto pages, Professor Forrest has extracted the pith and essence of the raw material contained in the body of the book. This clear, lively, and connected narrative of the Company's dealings with the Mahrattas during sixty eventful years shows how skilfully, with how much care and judgment, the editor has discharged his difficult task. Only those who have waded through the original records can fully appreciate the skill and labour bestowed on a summary which may be read with interest and advantage by many who might not choose to explore further. Among the new matter reserved for this opening essay is the letter in which Lieutenant Pruen, of the Bombay Marine, describes in sober, official language, an exploit rivalling that of Sir Richard Grenville on board the *Revenge*."—*Athenæum*.

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"Professor Forrest's Selections from the State papers in the Bombay Secretariat are so arranged that they form an excellent history of the Mahratta confederacy from its first consolidation under Shivaji to the Battle of Assaye. The plan followed is similar to that chosen by Carlyle in his edition of "Cromwell's Letters and Speeches." The story is told as much as possible by "the letters and narratives of the chief actors." But it is always difficult to give a perfectly intelligible and connected history out of original documents alone, and in the present case the difficulty of so doing would have been intensified by the fact that the Editor had to confine his selections for the most part to such documents as had never before been published. But from the circumstances of the case the documents selected for publication would, without a commentary, have been only partially intelligible to the ordinary reader. To supply this want the Editor has given in his introduction a graphic sketch of Mahratta history by which the letters quoted in the body of the work are bound together into a connected whole, so that the work

will not only be a storehouse of materials ready for future historians to use, but is itself an interesting and readable account of one of the most important periods of the history of Western India."—*Pioneer.*

"The substantial quarto which Mr. Forrest has just brought out under the auspices of the Government of Bombay represents painstaking and continuous work, which every future historian of the growth of British Rule in Western India will heartily appreciate. Mr. Forrest, as a mere glance at his book will show, must have made courageous flights into the realm of "Dry-as-Dust" before producing a collection of papers of such abiding historical interest as these. For in work of this kind the worker's merit is only half shown by what he puts in print; one must think of the ponderous files of manuscript which the careful Editor has rejected before one can quite appreciate the industry and selective judgment shown in the printed pages."—*Bombay Gazette.*

Opinions of the Press

ON THE

OFFICIAL WRITINGS OF MOUNTSTUART ELPHINSTONE, SOME TIME GOVERNOR OF BOMBAY.

EDITED, WITH A MEMOIR, BY

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